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PEOPLE

BY

PIERRE HAMP

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION BY

JAMES WHITALL

NEW YORK

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

1921

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THE QUINN & BODEN COMPANY
RAHWAY, N. J

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INTRODUCTION

One of the sketches in this volume, "Fat-Month," concerns an oven-man at a Paris pastry-shop. Fat-Month would, I think, have appeared to me with the robust plebeian countenance, the straggling black moustache, the quick brown eye of Pierre Hamp, even if I had not known that the author of "The Labour of Men" was once himself a pastry cook who, during off hours, read avidly in cheap copies of Victor Hugo by the light of a basement window. "Two things you must always care about: Justice and yer work," says the baker when he is discharged, to "Colossus," his tiny apprentice. That, in brief, is Hamp's whole philosophy. And I can see "Colossus," his overwhelming white sleeves tucked up from his grimy hands, gazing with unhappy longing after this friend of the miserable, this thick-set apostle of good work marching off so confidently into the future.

Hamp has indeed arrived at his place in French letters through the kind of material struggle which leaves most men voiceless and without hope. His great strength is that the struggle itself has made him articulate; his great originality, that in his evolution to intellectual power and expressiveness he has never

renounced his workman's heritage. Years as a pastry cook in France, England and Spain, followed, after a brief period of study, by years as a railway employee, and then by more years as a factory inspector in the textile north—this has been the substance of his life. He began to write of labourers as Conrad wrote of seamen; because he felt with them so passionately that he had to make some written record of their lives. His books, though not cast in autobiographic form, have the unmistakable quality of first-hand experience. Hamp is perhaps the only writer in any language who, rising from the "masses," has kept not only the unsentimental realism and the instinctive sympathies, but the muscles, the tough hide, and so to say the craft technique of the manual worker.

Zola might have conceived "Fish, Fresh Fish" ("Marée Fraîche"), the history of the lives involved in the conveyance of a fish from the Channel to the Paris restaurant. Anatole France might have written the sketch of the carpenter in "People," who, mending the bookshelf of a dramatic critic, learns with immoderate surprise and laughter that this gentleman earns his living by sitting in a theatre. But neither Zola, with his naturalism, nor France, with his delicate irony, could have given to the speech and thought of their working-class personages the tang, the poignant verity achieved by Hamp. He knows from having been inside their skins how the fishmonger, the carpenter,

the section-hand, the textile-worker feels, thinks, eats, loves, most significantly how he works—works and suffers and rebels from the increasingly machine-made civilization whose weight he carries on his back. The religion of the French craftsman of old was that nothing must be done unless it was well done, and Hamp's books are full of an almost lyrical celebration of the "irreplaceable" quality of technique which is being gradually displaced in modern life by automatic processes.

He sees his workmen not at all as Conrad sees his sailors. Not as isolated individuals with romantic or tragic destinies, but always as a part of a complex social and economic system, which exploits them, squeezes them dry. He measures them, as he has had to measure himself, by their producing power, and gauges their human happiness by their good or bad relation to their work. Before the war he sought in vain for happy workmen. During the war he found some. In fact the greatest virtue of the war, as Hamp the Socialist discovered it in "Le Travail Invincible" ("Labour the Invincible")—that very beautiful book which is chiefly a record of his inspections of factories in bombarded areas—was to make men love their work again. "Professional probity becomes the perfect form of patriotism." And yet Hamp does not oppose the mechanization of industry. His practical understanding reckons with all the consequences of

his country's reluctance to progress, and he tells her in plain terms what he believes to be her duty and her necessity,—"Victory by Machinery" ("La Victoire Mécanicienne").

Like the Belgian Verhaeren, Hamp conceives the modern industrial struggle "into which is poured the strength of men, and from whence comes their inevitable misery," as a new field for art. "In labour there is great beauty, there is religion, and when we become conscious of it, as the Greeks were conscious of the beauty of the human body, as Virgil understood and loved Nature, our art will be a living force in our civilization." He sees himself almost prophetically as one of the forerunners of a new literary technique and takes peculiar pleasure in writing of a trade in its exact trade terms, which are almost Choctaw to the average reader. He sees himself also as a documentarian, and pours out facts and statistics from the crater of his soul like a conglomerate stream of lava. The product is impressionistic; it is sometimes formless, opaque and bewildering, but almost always warm and vital because the heat in the core of the volcano is so intense; and because this writer who despises men of letters and loves his fellow-labourers is, after all, less a scientific statistician and social reformer than a poet with a highly personal angle of vision.

The present volume is not a collection of short stories in the usual American sense,—stories with a

neat development and a climax. If they stay persistently in our minds it is because, like life, they have no real beginning or end and no ready-made solution. "The Fried-Potato Sisters" who took to prostitution from sweated work; "Nounou," the unmarried mother who tried to be a wet-nurse; "The Fly-Catcher," the weak-minded incurable, routed out to vote, claimed and rewarded with a series of drinks by rival factions; "At the Chevalier Restaurant," where the cooks rebel from preparing the daily expensive meal of the pet poodle of a fashionable demi-mondaine—these and the rest of the sketches are like a series of sharp, revealing pictures thrown on the screen of our ignorance of what goes on behind the polished surfaces of the world.

Who that had always been well fed could realize that a poor child asking for bread was telling the truth because she said, "We ain't got enough to eat."? If she had been lying, says Hamp, she would say, "We ain't got nothing to eat." Hamp's virtue as a social philosopher is that he makes one know the misery of the unprivileged classes as he made one know the horrors of war, without admitting the possibility of despair. There is nothing in his experience that man cannot endure, and therefore accomplish eventually, in the way of his own liberation. "We have accepted once for all," he wrote me recently, "that our pleasure should be in the struggle. It will be hard. Our gen-

eration will not again know tranquillity. But the pleasure of trying to make things go better, and the hope that they may be well some day or other, for us or our children, renders everything bearable." There speaks the father of a sizable French family whom one saw in 1917-1919 rising at five and writing until ten, before proceeding to his day's duty of settling disputes between the workmen and the Munitions Ministry.

ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This book was written and in the publisher's hands before the War, and since then much has happened to the world and to myself. To amuse oneself at the game of writing is a senile occupation; let us try to say the things that must be said, or be silent,—though beautiful French, from the phrases of Amyot to the lines of the *Légende des Siècles,* is a source of keen delight to those who love it.

If a purely literary work has any reason for existing, some excuse might be found in a real devotion to the French language. Without comparing French to the other languages men speak,—each one of which has its greatness if it has great poets,—but simply taking it as it is, and in its deserved place, it can be written only by those who love it with intensity and completeness. Let the writings of those who have loved beautiful French be forgiven them, but may contempt be heaped upon those who string words together as a support for their pride, and carelessly turn out books in the hope of securing a fleeting success and some small profit. They are trying to carve marble with a tool more suited to collecting mud.

To love the language one writes is not enough, even

for the greatest artist. He must love men; and if, in his pursuit of fine phrases, he visits them with sneering sarcasm, he deserves abuse more bitter than that submitted to by Christ. We read the writings of many nations, but to us they are as sounding brass, if they have sprung from minds that know no human kindness.

There is agony in peoples' hearts, and they are groping in the blood-splashed darkness of Death. How insignificant seems the game of writing now, with its unreal treatment of things! Intellectual absurdities, prevalent among literary men, are dangerous to a Nation stricken with fear. Whether one dies an Academician or a man of letters, one is no more than a corpse, except that one's body stays at normal temperature and shifts from chair to chair in quest of Literature. Out of our great love for France, let us pray for a special epidemic to sweep away busy scribes bending over their desks, and all those who rush to the ink pot every morning to pad out their flimsy ideas with words. What a contemptible trade writing is! The Commercial Code permits the sale of writings, as it does that of unhewn timber, but the literary caste will never admit its commercialism. It claims public esteem for its disinterestedness, and is totally unworthy of it. Academies are as good as Chambers of Commerce. Literary prizes are as earnestly sought after as bounties for the growing of fine flax, and

those for the exportation of sugar are coveted with equal energy.

What is a man of letters who is only a man of letters? Cardboard and papier maché! A machine for the production of words! And the people of the pen are furious when one calls them word-artists.

The privilege of being a man of letters is not obtained as is that of wearing a robe or carrying a sword. Society has no respect for writers; it considers well-made shoes more necessary than inked paper. To go barefoot is a far greater privation than to live without reading ineptitudes. A writer cannot justify himself on the ground of apostleship,—a rare occurrence in the literary trade,—but on that of his assistance to the paper and cardboard trades and the bookseller. If publishers are ever able to export pornographic books, the French exchange will be strengthened, and writers who are considered despicable will at least deserve the felicitations of the Foreign Trade Office.

The existing commercialism of the literary profession is an inevitable consequence of the division of labour. How splendid and sincere would be the literature of a nation whose people wrote only in their leisure moments, and because they felt moved to write! We are all specialists and cannot have two callings. A flax-spinner must spin flax, and though he may possess a fine mind, he cannot let us see into it. A writer has his living to earn by putting black on white, and there

is no trade more deplorable. If it is stupefying always to do and think the same thing, then *belles lettres* can dull one's mind as much as selling meat, only one wears cuffs. The commercial end of a writer's activities requires more compromising with conscience than is made by a reputable travelling salesman who knows the quality of his goods. The presenting of copies, signed by the author, to all those who can print a good word for it, is the most important step in the process of publishing a book after it is bound, and no time must be lost in doing this. But the flattering of critics does not sell a book. Printed praise of any commodity has its price, and kissing a critic's toes is of no avail without a visit to the cashier of the newspaper. This is the accepted method of procuring publicity. A wine merchant presents knives and calendars to saloon keepers; a dealer in costly soaps publishes the signatures of prominent people who use them; and a publisher buys printed praise for his books.

To find fault with business acumen shows a complete misunderstanding of the present state of affairs, but one can still have great respect for the man who cares to write only for his friends, and disdains to sell the record of his thoughts.

Literary people are not a select group, consecrated to the self-effacing duty of guarding the public mind. Success in literature comes as in politics, or the selling of foodstuffs; only, in the vermicelli trade, you have

something to offer, and can make good your claims. In the presence of his critics, a writer is like a shamefaced travelling salesman.

Writers who mix Holy Water or petrol with their ink, to suit the rage of the moment, prove themselves out of pace with the times. And now, when people are hoping to be saved by Labour, Art has scarcely begun to reflect it. Worshippers of Beauty, Mysticism, and Militarism have sung their songs of Love, of Religion, and of War. Who will sing to-day of the splendours of Labour to the nations of Industry, and of the contest for wealth, into which is poured the strength of men, and from whence comes their inevitable misery?

If there are curses, let them be set before us in flaming letters! If it be a song of triumph, then let the world echo with new hope.

What value have our miserable little books, setting forth the diversions of this man and that woman, in a world that knows not its destiny, beside the radiant love of the Shulamite or of Chloë, two thousand years older than the stars that once shone down upon them?

If we are unworthy, and deserving of contemptuous mockery, may our pride be dragged in the dust; but if there be praise for our efforts and pity for our suffering, speak to us, O thoughtful and mighty Poets! In you there is the gentleness of Virgins and the fury of Prophets,—speak, Mankind is listening.

Men have become the prey of poison and fire, cannon and sword, but thy genius, O France, utters no words of pity for their misfortunes or denunciation of the crime.

The nation puts forth heroic efforts, but behind them is suffering as deep as the deepest ocean, and there is no one to measure it, or to listen to a sob that might echo through millions of years.

People are worn out with laughter and weeping, yet they cannot endure silence, and ineptitudes still flow from loathsome pens.

But will the noblest thoughts change human nature? After centuries of writing, men, and Gods too,—sermonizing from the tops of mountains,—have failed to make human beings less fond of tearing each other to pieces with artillery, and of living through the disasters arranged by their scientists.

Will man emerge from the fury of the storm with discouragement written upon his brow? No. He will be hopeful to the day of his death. We always covet the impossible; but there is one joy left to us, and that is the knowledge that men are waiting. For millions of years they have been waiting for Peace. War has now burst over them with a violence surpassing that of the mightiest volcanic eruption. Humanity is listening for a voice to console her for being what she is, and to strengthen her hope for better things. She is not disheartened.

The dawn of this new epoch in the world's history was red with the blood of men, and the art of a murdered nation must be sublime or it cannot exist. A field, wider than any that men have ever dealt with, greater than War, richer than Beauty, and nobler than Love, now offers itself to the artist: Labour. Never, since man has lived by the sweat of his brow, has the toil that nourishes a love-making, war-waging world been reflected in human poetry.

The greatest poet of Labour was Jehovah, who stood in the Garden of Eden, and called down eternal maledictions upon the work of men's hands.

Torrents of suffering rush down upon us to-day, carrying men off to their mysterious fate, but no hopeful voice calls to us out of the future. Minds keep silent watch, while the valiant nation sets a superb example of human force.

Out of such splendid effort, such cruel suffering, and such hopefulness, why do not thoughtful intellects arise, whose ringing words will create new forms?

Come, Poet. The world awaits you.

PIERRE HAMP.

PEOPLE

THE FRIED-POTATO SISTERS

Martha Rondefrite was fifteen years old, and she worked at home. She wanted as many working hours as possible, so she did hardly any cooking, and bought things from the pork-butcher. Two sous' worth of fried potatoes for each person were always ordered, according to the family custom. Sometimes her eighteen-year-old sister Georgette got these on her way home in the evening, from their favourite frying-cook's stall, sandwiched in next to the wine-shop.

Their unfailing answer to the neighbours' question:

"Hello, Martha, where are you off to?"

"To get two sous' worth of fried potatoes."

"How goes it, Georgette; where are you comin' from?"

"From gettin' two sous' worth of fried potatoes," stuck to them after a time, and people called them the Little Rondefrites.*

Mme. Rondefrite sold vegetables and fruit on a barrow, by virtue of Municipal Permit No. 727 obtained on the death of her man, Jules Dame, cab-driver, who used to say: "You can live on two sous' worth of fried potatoes." To that, however, he had

* *Rond de frites,* a penny portion of fried potatoes.

always added three absinths, and some half-pints of wine: white before dinner, and red in the evening.

They lived in the rue de Belleville, on the sixth floor of a house with a wagon entrance leading to a shed, where Mme. Rondefrite kept her barrow. On Sundays she took her daughters for a walk, and, being a decent woman, she roundly abused any man who tried to slip her his card.

The girls had to get paying work when they were young, and they did artificial flowers, bead wreaths, ready-made clothing, shoe button-holes, and feather-curling, one after the other, in the busy season of each trade. The result of this was that they were fairly good in most lines, but experienced workers in none.

Later on, Georgette took it into her head to specialize, and she became a mounter of artificial flowers at a work-room in the rue Saint-Denis. In that trade, when there are new models to duplicate, the forewoman generally chooses the nimblest hands for the job,—in other words, the champions. In the case of women who work at home, the making-up price is determined by the time required. Three sous is paid for making a spray of Burgundy roses, in half an hour. Hence the normal rate: six sous an hour. The champion starts off at a killing pace, to please the forewoman, but after the first hour she is done for.

This hustling fixes the rate of pay. A piece-worker, working twelve hours a day, takes an hour to make one of these three-sou sprays of roses.

The forewoman made Georgette Rondefrite enter the lists, for her fingers were very nimble; and she stood in with the other girls, because she didn't prejudice the forewoman against them.

One day a girl, out of work, came to the work-room, grumbling about her rent and her sick husband, and offered herself at ten sous less a day for the work Georgette was doing. She was engaged, and worked hard in order to show her gratitude to the forewoman. Thus the hourly pay was brought down to four sous, and she was nicknamed Vermin.

That evening Georgette was all ready to let her have it from the shoulder. Vermin took on airs and swept past her, but the rest began to hoot, and she burst into tears.

"I'll dry your tears for you!" cried Georgette. "Couldn't you have landed a job without cutting down the money like that? Why didn't you say so, if you were in trouble? We could have fixed that up for you." Then she finished by slapping her in the face, but she didn't come to work next morning, for, on the way from the rue Saint-Denis to Belleville, she found the means of spending a little while without working, in the person of M. Lepiqueur, forty years old, and a wholesale dealer in sponges. Twice a week

she helped him to enjoy life, and he helped her to exist.

She kept on doing flowers and, when the need became urgent, men. A well-to-do bachelor, whom she met on the same corner, cut out M. Lepiqueur, and offered her a set of furniture worth four hundred and eighty francs, including a wardrobe with a mirror set in the door; and he rented her a room in the rue des Petites-Ecuries at twenty-five francs a month.

"There's plenty of girls of your age would be mighty glad to have as nice a layout," said Mme. Rondefrite, "but I don't approve of it! When I started housekeeping with your father, I wasn't thinkin' only of pleasure. If I was to box your ears I couldn't keep you at home. It's time you were making out for yourself, but it wrings my heart just the same."

Martha's disapproval of Georgette's irregular intercourse was marked by much more rudeness, and her insults were very bitter, for she was jealous of her well-dressed sister.

Georgette, without any ill-feeling, contributed twenty-five francs a month towards her own lunch; she declared that the fried potatoes to be had in the rue Saint-Denis had no taste at all compared with those at Belleville, and one Saturday night she brought one of her friends along to appreciate them. Martha

was working at some garments in ticking,—forty sous a day,—and she had a very cold welcome for her sister's friend, who was equally well-dressed.

"So you kick up your heels too, do you?"

"No. I've got a friend. I used to do flowers in the summer and feathers in the winter, and it brought me fifty francs a month. Fifteen to mama for my lunch; fifteen to the milkman for morning and evening; twelve for my room; and that left me eight to dress myself, and to spend on Sundays. It's no fun to see your friends go off to the country, when you've got to stay in town and wander about like a lost dog. I can't get along without some kind of fun. If I couldn't go boating in summer and to the theatre in winter, I'd die of boredom! With wages like that, you've got to have a man, if you want any peace at all. I've found one who gives me clothes and pays my rent. So much the better for me."

A fluttering of wings took Georgette to the window, where she found the canary in terror at some caterwauling on the next roof. She brought the cage into the room, and covered it with a cloth, whispering kisses to the poor little thing. Then she made room at the window for her friend, and they gazed down at the street below them. Upon the walls there were brilliant squares of light, cast across from the windows opposite, through which passed rapid silhouettes of the people on the pavements; now and then they could

see the slow-moving outline of a woman of the streets in search of business.

Fruit and vegetables were being offered at reduced prices from the barrows, and these cries came up to the sixth floor, as though distilled from the confused murmur of the street. On each barrow a candle could be seen burning steadily, sheltered from the wind by a half-circle of stiff paper. The shops all had their shutters up, and the bars blazed forth like the mouths of great furnaces with their groups of stokers.

Each of the windows in the opposite wall framed a picture of people with elbows on the sill; behind them, sitting at tables, tired women were hurrying to finish the day's sewing. Circles, tinted according to the colour of the lamp-shades, were thrown upon the ceilings, and showers of bright light fell upon the foreheads of men, desperately calculating how to pay for their eating, sleeping, and loving.

Above the roofs of the houses all was peaceful, and the strokes of a clock fell upon the stillness, like pearls dropping from a broken necklace.

After dinner, Mme. Rondefrite carried some sewing she had finished back to the rue Réaumur, with a friend who had come to help her.

"Take it easy," said Georgette, "they're open till ten on Saturdays."

Martha crossed her knees beneath the piece of ticking she was sewing; Georgette was playing with two

spools on the table, and when she stretched out her arms to pick them up, you could see a gold bracelet on her left wrist.

"It's just like the work-room here. Always someone scowling," she declared.

Martha burst out scornfully, "Oh, your work-room!"

She stopped her sewing to look at the bracelet, and began to pick the dust out of the cracks in the table with her needle. Georgette laughed, showing all her well-polished teeth, and Martha threw the ticking in her face.

The stuff unrolled and dragged the lamp from the table to the floor, where it broke,—fortunately after it had gone out. The girls didn't scream, but when they had gotten their breath back, they were in opposite corners of the dark room, now filled with petroleum fumes. Georgette, standing tiptoe in her twenty-five-franc shoes, held a lighted candle as high as her arm would reach, and they could see the soaked ticking and the broken lamp.

"That's a good day's work! You'll have to pay for the ticking, and buy another lamp."

Martha wept bitterly at the thought of this crushing responsibility, and then, snuffling up her tears, she wailed, "I'm going to drown myself . . . in the canal . . . it's nearer than the Seine and not so many people. You won't see me any more! I've got enough

of this. . . . You always have a good time . . . go to dances . . . people give you jewellery. And I sit here all day long sewing waistcoats! I won't stand it any longer. . . . I'll kill myself. . . ."

She ran to the window, but Georgette was just as nimble and stronger. She got the better of her and then coaxed, "Stop crying; they'll like you as well as me. Wait a jiffy."

The bracelet was slipped on Martha's wrist, and she held it up to the light, while Georgette did up her hair, and changed combs with her.

Their mother, weary with climbing six flights, was just outside the door, and as she entered, Georgette cut short her astonishment at the smell of petroleum: "I upset the lamp, but I'll get a prettier one. . . . I'm going to take Martha along with me to dance to-night. She never goes out."

And Mme. Rondefrite didn't struggle against Fate.

NOUNOU *

M. Sauvestre, Mayor of Chaufours, a commune of plaster-burners, knocked the mud from his big shoes at the entrance of the Town Hall, and slowly ascended the steps to his office. On its whitened walls, four French flags, which had been bought at the *Galeries Amienoises*, radiated out from behind the pale bust of the Republic.

M. Jules Marnier, a teacher in one of the elementary schools, who was the Mayor's deputy, sat at a pine table working at the office accounts.

M. Sauvestre knocked out the contents of his pipe at the edge of the table:

"Anything new from that Leloup girl?"

M. Marnier supplied the required details:

"She gave birth to a daughter, father unknown, at the Amiens Hospital where we put her. She's coming back with it to-morrow."

"For God's sake, let her stay where she is! We've got enough responsibility now with her paralysed mother, let alone her and her bastard. It's impossible! She'll have to take a place somewhere."

The next day the Mayor paid a visit to old Mme.

* *Nounou,* nurse.

Leloup's hovel at the edge of the fields. She was paralysed on one side, and she lived upon crusts that people gave her, and vegetables stolen with her left arm. Her daughter, Celestine, sat on a three-legged stool, smiling at her infant while she fed it. Only half-satisfied, it was vigorously chewing at her abundant breast, and the pain caused her to wink her eyes every now and then, but there was physical pleasure in it.

"You'll have to go away again. There's no chance here for you to earn the money to keep your mother, and that little mite too. You've got milk, so you'd better go to Paris and be a wet-nurse. Our midwife here knows the employment agencies. You'll be happy if you can help your mother, who has to beg for her living."

The old woman lifted her untidy head:

"If me old man hadn't died at the kilns, I wouldn't be needin' anybody's help."

"You ought to have looked after your girl; why, she doesn't even know where she got the brat."

"Sure I does. It's little Firmin, the lime-burner, who's a soldier at Arras now. There wasn't nobody else." She looked at her baby and began to cry. "I ain't got no money to go to Paris!"

"Don't worry about that. We'll give you a start, and you can pay it back out of your first month's wages."

So she set forth with her offspring, and a layette, which the Relief Board gave her.

The Widow Brousse, who kept a Registry Office, was well recommended by the midwives of the Somme district, and she met Celestine at the Gare du Nord, in order to take her to her establishment in the rue Censier. It comprised a reception room for clients, with windows on the street, and a large room with two windows, behind the court, for the nurses. There were ten beds around the walls, and ten of them could sleep in coolness and comfort, or twenty, two in a bed. A circular railing guarded the stove, and attached to it by means of rings were the heads of ten cradles where ten babies could be put, or twenty, foot to foot, or side by side, or arranged in any other way that would best utilize the heat. The stove was lit at one o'clock in the afternoon, and again at one in the morning.

The nurses had to pay ten sous a day for their lodging, and thirty for their food. Celestine didn't want to spend thirty sous a day for two meals, so she arranged her own, and they were mostly bread and cheese. Sometimes her comrades took her to a charitable society, where beef and lentils were to be had by poor women who were nursing their babies.

The women who had had their babies in Paris knew all the places where one could obtain food, and were up to all the dodges for getting help from the Relief Board. Some of them went out on Sunday afternoons,

thereby losing the opportunity of being interviewed at the office and getting placed, but the street offered excellent chances to earn the money to keep going until the following Sunday.

They all envied Celestine Leloup for her fresh complexion.

"I'd be a rich woman if I had a head like you," said one of them.

During the week, while they waited drearily for the arrival of possible clients, the women played cards near the cradles, or retailed their troubles, or plagued Anne-Marie Anic, a bad-smelling Breton, who only knew three French words: "Hou lâ lâ!" Every evening she wept into her great yellow handkerchief, stained with tobacco-snuff.

The Widow Brousse welcomed the visitors with a slight inclination of her shiny forehead, with its bang of black oily hair, and made her customary remarks about the slimy courtyard and the two sick-looking trees:

"The nurses have good fresh air here; they can take their babies out there into the garden."

They had to cross it in all weathers, shielding, as best they could, these infants who had to be shown naked to fussy clients, in order to prove that they were healthy.

After others had proved unsatisfactory, Anne-Marie Anic, Celestine Leloup, and a Parisian who had at

one time been syphilitic, presented themselves for the consideration of twenty-five-year-old Mme. Barbieux, who was wearing a hat with an enormous array of feathers on it.

"Oh, lé lé, what a hat!" muttered the Parisian.

"Hou lâ lâ!" repeated Anne-Marie Anic.

A dumpy little midwife accompanied Mme. Barbieux. She asked the ages of the babies, and mauled them about so much that they started to yell. Mme. Barbieux drew away from Anne-Marie Anic:

"Good gracious! How dreadfully she smells!"

The midwife was very much taken by the fine, blue-veined skin and white breasts of the Parisian, but Mme. Barbieux was more attracted by Celestine's air of youthful innocence. She had wanted an unmarried mother, who could be had for less money, and who would be unlikely to come to her in the middle of her time, saying that unless she had higher wages she would have to go back to her husband who needed her. No one would disturb this girl.

The midwife verified the condition of her teeth, and tested her milk on a piece of white paper, and Celestine, crying over her sleeping infant, was finally engaged.

"The little one will be well taken care of," the Widow Brousse assured her, "you'll only have to pay twenty sous a day, and the woman will come day after to-morrow. If you go on like this, your milk will

stop. And if that happens, don't forget that I can place you as a dry-nurse."

In the carriage, Mme. Barbieux comforted this broken-hearted little mother, whose milk now belonged to M. Léon Barbieux. The bottle didn't suit him, and he yelled from morning till night. But as soon as he was placed at Celestine's full breast, he became silent, and the end of his meal came only because he had fallen asleep.

Mme. Piau, from Marçon (Sarthe), came two days later to get Marie Leloup from the Widow Brousse, and she paid Celestine a visit in Mme. Barbieux's kitchen. Seated beneath a row of polished casseroles, with a glass of warm wine beside her, she put her big-veined hands on her knees, turned her placid face, with its two piercing eyes, upon Celestine, and began to speak slowly:

"Babies . . . it's always babies. We knows a thing or two about 'em. . . . There ain't no better place than the Sarthe. I never had one die on me. That Ruau woman, who works in the fields, buried one last year; and the same thing with that Malhoure girl. With me, never! The air's grand at my place."

"You're going to give mine yer own milk, ain't ye?" asked Celestine.

"I've got enough milk for two! If I didn't I'd put mine on the bottle. Not yours. You can be easy about yer little one. I know my business, all right."

"Of course," joined in Mme. Barbieux, who had entered the kitchen. "I can see that Mme. Piau is capable of taking good care of your little girl. You needn't be anxious at all. The important thing is not to get yourself worked up over it."

Celestine had to pay Mme. Piau for the first month in advance: thirty francs; then there were fifteen francs travelling expenses, and an office fee of five francs, making in all fifty francs ten centimes, with the stamp. Mme. Barbieux gave her one month's money in advance: sixty francs. And Mme. Barbieux had also to pay the Widow Brousse a fee of seventy francs for getting Celestine for her, and an office charge of five francs as well. Also, the Widow Brousse charged Mme. Piau twenty francs for getting her the job of looking after Marie Leloup. Thus she cleared a hundred francs for her trouble in behalf of Celestine and Marie Leloup, mother and daughter.

Mme. Barbieux provided Celestine with clean linen and a cap with red ribbons, and allowed her an unlimited supply of expensive food. All she had to do was to push M. Léon in his white coach, to change him, and every two and a half hours to place the softened point of one of her breasts between his lips.

She sent what money she had left to her mother, and was filled with pride at seeing her charge do so well. In fact she found life extremely pleasant. She

adored undressing him, while he kicked about on her lap, and she understood perfectly when he said, "Aee. Aee. Que-que," that he enjoyed wiggling his little bent legs:

"Come into the world sittin', didn't ye, my lazy little pet?"

"Ae. Ae."

"Look, Madame, he follows me like a light." She went to the other end of the room, and the child's eyes never left her.

"Me too," cajoled Mme. Barbieux, "Loulou, Cutie!" M. Léon began to cry, because he couldn't see Nounou, who was standing behind her mistress.

"Nounou, take him quickly and stop his crying; it's easy to see you don't love him," said Mme. Barbieux angrily. And Nounou laughed and laughed; then she began to think:

"And my own little Marie, she don't know no one but her nurse." Then she asked: "She's fed at the breast, ain't she, Madame?"

"Certainly, Nounou!" But an anonymous letter came, saying: " . . . your child, whom you left with the Piau woman, won't live long. She's beating it until the blood comes!"

Mistress and nurse wept together.

"How can people be so wicked!" moaned Mme. Barbieux. "If you worry yourself now, Léon will have colic. . . ."

M. Barbieux wrote to the Mayor of Marçon, and the reply was:

"The Leloup child is doing well. . . ."

All Nounou's letters were intercepted, but one day when she was pushing M. Léon in his coach, a woman, who was hurrying past, put a note into her hand: "My sister is going to Paris, and this is a good chance to tell you that your little girl is at death's door. That Piau woman . . ."

Celestine ate nothing that evening, and M. and Mme. Barbieux were beside themselves:

"But your milk will surely stop!" And that is what happened. "My poor Léon! A change of nurses. And he was doing so well with this one!"

Mme. Barbieux put on her big feathered hat, and hurried around to the Widow Brousse, who let her have the Parisian, and said to Celestine when she returned:

"You are a queer one! The girl who's taking your place won't lose her milk through worrying over her baby. I won't get the chance to send a third to that lady. Don't fret yourself; I'll get you a place as dry-nurse."

But a week later she told her:

"You're too young. You've never brought up an infant, and people won't trust you, and I can't keep you here any longer. Next week you'll have to send thirty francs to Marçon; when the money doesn't

come promptly, those Sarthe people take babies to the Relief Board. . . .! Don't cry like that; things always come out all right in this life. I'm going to place you as maid-of-all-work. I know of a big house where they're looking for one. You've got a pretty face, and they like that. You'll get tips as big as you are yourself."

The following day the Widow Brousse proposed Celestine to M. Marius Bissac, a wholesale merchant, according to his visiting card. He was a big, red-faced, smooth-shaven man, benevolent in appearance and deliberate in movement and speech. He gave the Widow Brousse a hundred francs.

"All right. Come along," he said.

And Celestine set forth for the brothel.

THE SWEET SMELLER

In 1870, Eugène Cauchoit, nicknamed the Sweet Smeller, was living in the rue des Couronnes, in a house that contained sixty-three families. He was a leather-dresser and the smell of his working clothes,—no worse, perhaps, than that of the staircase he climbed so often,—had brought him this worthy designation. He wasn't at all a bad sort.

During the Siege, the Sweet Smeller had no job, and began by being delighted to earn thirty sous a day in the national guard, but he soon became obsessed by the fear of stopping a bullet by the wall of Père-Lachaise. Old Moreau, one of his neighbours, was also in the national guard, and he had no job either, for his trade was cleaning out cesspools, and, as he said, "Those places don't fill up very fast, while the siege is on."

Out of those sixty-three families who lived in the house in the rue des Couronnes, only three people escaped the bullets of the Versailles people: two old women who were wounded, and Eugène Jr., the Sweet Smeller's youngest child.

The sombre glory of the riot mounted guard, gnawing its fists over the heroes slaughtered for the God of their kind: Revolution.

Life resumed its usual pace again, and when our martyr's destitute son was asked by his cronies to spend a sou, he always said, "But I haven't a *pélaud!*"* So he came to be called Pélaud in the neighbourhood where he passed his dreary childhood. His only pleasure was to scream, "To hell with the police!" And never did enthusiasm for a new religion take such complete possession of the minds of its devotees as did hatred of the police that of this little savage. But he never got into any trouble, and with the help of some neighbours later on he set up as a lamp-maker: hand-lamps and carriage-lamps. And he earned from forty to fifty francs a week when he worked reasonably hard.

About this time he met Jeanne Depuis, who earned five francs a day at home, making sugar-candy angels for confectioners. Once Pélaud cut his hand working at his lamps, and Jeanne bound it up for him, while he admired the army of angels hanging from a piece of twisted brass wire. The little candy figures trembled and shook with the nervous skipping about of Simone, Jeanne's daughter by her first lover. He had been locked up some years before; not enough money, and too much flourishing of knives. He imagined himself an anarchist and his motto was: "Live by sponging, and die without giving a damn!"

When his cut had been attended to, gratitude moved

* *Pélaud,* slang for "sou."

the lamp-maker to send the little girl out for a litre of white wine, and while she was gone Jeanne Depuis became Mme. Pélaud. Their illegitimate union was abundantly blessed, the babies were brought into the world with rapidity and improvidence. Simone was now old enough to look after them, while her mother kept on working with her gum-dragon paste and sugar-candy.

The sixth little Pélaud died unwillingly for Religion, as his grandfather, the Sweet Smeller, had done for the Revolution. When he was eight days old he was taken to be baptized, for at Sacré-Cœur twenty francs could be obtained by mothers who came promptly to this damp ceremony.

Mme. Pélaud, being terribly hard up, accomplished a quick recovery in order to avail herself of this windfall. But, in the street, a malicious north wind pierced the infant's scanty wrappings, and the priest, muffled to the eyes against the icy atmosphere of the church, finished him off by pouring a little too much cold water over his head, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So the twenty francs had to pay for his funeral, but he was buried a Christian.

Death loves to retrace its steps; simple-minded people say, "It never rains but it pours." And the truth of these threadbare words was borne out, for Pélaud became consumptive. The doctor said, "Live in the country; eat raw meat, and more of every-

thing. Breathe plenty of good air. Good-afternoon."

Pélaud took as much of this good advice as his means would permit. He went for walks in the evening, after eating his share of meat, and also his wife's, —she had discovered the advantages of vegetarianism. In spite of this, he found himself unable to do a full day's work, lost his position, and had to make out with odd jobs. But these didn't last more than a few hours, because the moment he was discovered to be too ill to do good work he was told to go.

At the end of three successive quarters, they had to move, because there was no money for the rent. Pélaud became irritable beyond endurance. The chairs got wobbly, and the cupboard,—which no longer contained the pile of crusts,—parted company with its doors, owing to the repeated visits of the children, who always expected to find something there. The doors always came down on their heads with a bang, but they were so hungry that they didn't feel it.

Then came a period of six months in the garret of one of a group of houses containing three hundred and eighteen other tenants, in the Combat quarter, where their rent was paid by a charitable society composed of benevolent ladies in silks and satins. The children spent hours looking down through the deep gully between the houses at the people coming out of the work-rooms to climb the steep ascent. When a

wagon passed up the street, it sounded like the roll of a distant drum. Busses, as full as ambulance wagons after a defeat, cut their way through the swarming humanity.

The crowd thickened at the steepest places, and there was as much elbowing and jostling in the middle of the street as on the pavement. When the time came for the streetwalkers to take up their positions, —it was easy to distinguish these women by the clean aprons they wore, showing no sign of wear, except that the pockets were pulled out of shape by the weight of idle hands,—the Pélaud children went down, and out into the street, where they followed four municipal guards in tufted shakos, bound for the theatre to perform their nightly duties. Then they stood in front of a butcher shop, blazing with light, and feasted their eyes upon a frieze of shining hooks, supporting dead sheep with green leaves wired to their tails.

The third little Pélaud revealed artistic tendencies by drawing pictures of his family on the staircase walls, with a piece of charcoal stolen from the shop where Wines and Coal were sold. The doorkeeper expostulated, saying it wouldn't have been so bad if only one corner had been spoiled. But what was he to do? The family was such a big one! As it was, he had to huddle his figures together so as not to leave anyone out, and, since they all looked alike, he wrote a name on each stomach.

They got notice to clear out, as was to be expected, and no other garret was to be found. An exhausted woman, a dying man, and six kids! The janitors all said in self-defence, "Put yourselves in the proprietor's place." And since no proprietor troubled to put himself in their place, the Pélaud furniture was put out into the court at the end of the quarter. But when this fact was discovered by the three hundred and eighteen other tenants, they screamed their indignation from the windows, and M. Balance, the representative of the Corporation that owned the property, found a solution for the difficulty.

His wine-cellars were getting mouldy,—they were never used, because his tenants went to the seventy-five retail dealers in the neighbourhood for their liquor. Six francs a month bought the Pélauds the right to live "in a cool place" like so many rich man's wine casks. But there were serious drawbacks; the budding artist had no staircase wall upon which to exercise his talent, and the others were deprived of the thrilling occupation of gazing down into the street from the sixth floor. They could only look at the passing feet, through the little ventilating holes along the edge of the pavement. The young artist considered that this descent beneath the earth was a punishment administered by God, for he had questioned the priest at catechism: "God is everywhere: in Heaven, on earth, and in all places." "Then God is everywhere

at our house, Father? " " Yes, my child." " And he's in the room with papa, mama, my big sister, and little Blanblan? " " Yes, my child." " And in the wine-cellar too, Father? " " Yes, my child." " Oh hell! Father. We've got no wine-cellar; we get our wine by the litre from the wine-shop."

And now God did come to the wine-cellar; Pélaud died there. The undertakers were a little drunk when they came to get him, the day being Monday, and they couldn't quite decide whether they were to bury him on the spot or to take him out. But when they looked out through the ventilating holes and saw neither sky nor green grass, they knew what to do.

The poor woman didn't stay weeping at Père-Lachaise for very long, and she came back to work for her brats, who were crying for their father, and looking for crusts of bread.

A few happy weeks followed, though she almost killed herself with work, and could now only make three francs a day,—in her younger days she had always earned six. Then the little artist died, and the doctor told her it was because they lived in a cellar. If she stayed there, she would lose them all, for they had the disease that had carried off the father.

By a stroke of good luck she found another garret, and moved there at once. Simone was only strong enough to look after the kids; she blew their noses, washed them, made them kiss and make up after

fighting, and tried to keep them from thinking too much about eating, until their poor mother, who worked eighteen hours a day, had earned the price of their food.

Mme. Pélaud lost little time in sleep. The moment she got into the family bed, the kids, pushed together by her presence, began to wriggle their little bodies violently, in order to enlarge their share of the mattress. The cover was pulled hard in every direction, and then retained by putting it between the teeth, and those who slept with their mouths open had to do without it. Their mother could scarcely ever settle down to a good sleep, because of the continuous kicking and flinging about, and she generally got up and sat on a chair, where she thought she could rest. But as soon as she was seated, she automatically took up her work.

She was really no more than an animal; for her, life meant feeding her children. And this would be the death of her. She had no other Faith or Principles.

Simone, who was always such a help to her, became weaker and weaker, and finally died. And then Mme. Pélaud understood that she was simply working to feed Death, who would knock them all down. She, the last, would complete the pile.

But their cries of hunger quickened the nimble fingers that moulded and coloured sugar angels for weddings and banquets.

MONSIEUR ROBLED'S THROAT

The worthy M. Robled, professor of mathematics, had a bad cough. It was an effort for him to make his wheezy voice heard, and this gave him the appearance of being angry. He wouldn't see a doctor, but he took a cough syrup to please his pupils. He refused to make any concessions, and gave his lessons in a voice which was, each day, more laboured.

"Your cough still hangs on?" his friends asked him.

He was a stocky little man, and he puffed out his broad chest to reply: "It's much better."

You felt that he was really screaming, but only the remnant of his voice could be heard.

His friend, M. Grulois, was greeted with the following information: "He is at the Saint-Antoine Hospital. He finally consented to undergo an examination, and they find that he probably has cancer of the throat."

M. Grulois, a young man with pink cheeks, did not try to discover whether his vigorous pace in the direction of the hospital was the result of delight in his excellent health, or of the satisfaction he got from being a faithful friend.

A nurse directed him: "The first ward, and turn to the right."

The healthy appearance of this appetizing woman in her fresh linen blouse pleased him greatly. He opened the door of the ward, and saw heads and hands moving in the white bedclothes. The stare of many pairs of solemn eyes kept him standing there by the door of the bright room. Then suddenly his attention was monopolized by the figure of a woman, who was not looking at him. Some cushions enabled her to sit up in her bed, so thin and so white that one would have thought her dead, had her eyes been closed. She was looking at a woman, dressed in black, who stood beside her. The nurse stopped for a second, and spoke to the dying woman: "You feel a little better?"

She shook her head, and the woman in black looked at the floor.

"Oh, but you do, you do!" replied the nurse, and then she came up to M. Grulois.

"M. Robled? This way." And she pointed to a private room, near the door. Before going in M. Grulois asked about the dying woman:

"What's the matter with her?"

"She suffers a great deal; she's got a little of everything. It will be all over soon. Yesterday we thought she had died, and they called in her sister."

M. Grulois felt subdued and rather uneasy; the

atmosphere of this room, where death was waiting, unnerved him; he trembled, and his eyes grew large.

"This way," repeated the nurse. She opened the door, and he should have gone in, but he could only take one step. Sitting on a chair near the bed, M. Robled seemed, owing to his extreme slenderness, to have grown back to the age of fourteen. Beneath a nose which had doubled in length, his mouth looked like a black hole, and his enormous eyes glowed with fury in his dried-up face. M. Grulois supposed that his enforced inactivity was the cause of this anger.

"You feel a little better?"

M. Robled shook his head.

"Oh, but you do, you do!" insisted his friend, and he realized that he was repeating the nurse's words to the dying woman.

M. Robled stood up: his back, which had been filled out with muscles, now fell inwards on either side of his spine. His clothes had become enormous upon his poor thin body, and he looked like a child dressed in its father's overcoat. He held a note-book in his bony white-nailed hands, and while he was writing in it, M. Grulois noticed the tube through which he was given his food, among the folds of his neck scarf.

M. Robled held out the note-book, in which was written:

" Bring me some books."

" Certainly," said M. Grulois, " certainly. I'll bring enough to keep you going for two weeks. In that time you'll be cured."

M. Robled glared at him. " Why," his friend wondered, " is he so irritated? Is it my insincerity? Does he know he is done for? And suppose he doesn't know it? "

M. Robled shook hands with him, and went over to open the door in spite of his protests: " Please don't bother. Please! "

" So that's it; he's deceiving himself. He's not out of his mind. A man who knows he's at the point of death doesn't take his friends to the door. And he shaved this morning too. On the other hand, he looked at me as if he thought I wasn't honest with him. Did he know it was cancer last month? He waited until the thing almost strangled him before he believed it was serious, and he went to the doctor only when he was no longer able to talk or eat. Who was he making fun of, with that syrup of his? Does he know he's a dead man? Does he know it? "

The next visit would be very difficult, and the prospect terrified M. Grulois. It exasperated him not to know what was in M. Robled's mind.

" Must I be sincere," he thought, " and kill him mentally; or must I feed his hopes with my falsehoods? "

After four days he came again. M. Robled had grown thinner, a thing that, on the first visit, had seemed impossible. His nose had sharpened now almost to a point, but his eyes glowed with the same force, and his eyelids were dry. M. Grulois put the books, some biscuits, and a bottle of wine on the table; then he started to talk to his friend as he would have done before his illness—about people they both knew and things they both cared for. M. Robled conversed by means of his note-book, and once his friend was unable to make out what he meant, so he mumbled his answer with an assumed air of understanding. M. Robled tore the page from the book, glaring at him furiously, and M. Grulois thought to himself:

"He suspects nothing! The cause of his irritation is simple enough. He's not angry with me because I'm lying, but because I don't understand him. It's annoying and humiliating for him." So he started to talk cheerfully of the things M. Robled would do when in good health again. M. Robled stood up, his overpowering gaze still fixed upon his friend, who did not dare to stop talking. Then he suddenly turned his back, covered his face with both hands, and buried his head in the bedclothes. He did not move for a second or two, and in that time the truth struck M. Grulois like the lash of a whip: the sick man knew that he would be dead in a few days.

M. Robled turned around, and his friend, who now maintained a dignified silence, looked him honestly in the eye, shook hands, and was shown again to the door.

By means of frequent calls, M. Grulois acquired great satisfaction, and his opinion of himself increased with each visit, but his intimacy with this man, who was pledged to unrelenting Death, finally enabled him to see so clearly into his own mind that he came to despise himself.

" What a shameful thing it is," he thought, " for me to puff myself up with pride, just because I'm a faithful friend to this wretched man. Still, if I bring him any pleasure, I don't suppose it matters. But how can I do this? He's only a bundle of suffering, and what good can I do him? Oh, the supreme cruelty that retards the death of doomed men! There is no one who loves this man enough to put an end to his frightful agony. And where could kindness be found that would be courageous enough to accomplish it? Perhaps someone would do it if he were confident that the action would be considered as praiseworthy as coming faithfully to see him."

One day he brought a revolver with him, but he lacked the courage to leave it on the bed when he went away. The nurse asked him not to tire M. Robled with long visits, and this made it easier to endure the annoyance of no longer knowing what to

reply to the scribbled questions, which became each day more difficult to read. M. Grulois arrived at complete sincerity; he was what he was: a man watching another man die. He acted from pure, unaffected kindness. One morning he went to see his friend without even feeling glad that his motives were absolutely unselfish. It was his final purification.

The nurse met him at the door of M. Robled's room. "He isn't there any longer. He died in the night, and we found him lying stretched out very straight on his bed. He wrote his will on a leaf from his note-book; his body goes to the Medical School."

"Was it legible?" asked M. Grulois.

"Yes, I read it."

Some of M. Robled's other friends came, and they decided:

"We'll go to his autopsy, as though it were a funeral." And they went the next morning to a long, well-lighted room with flowers blooming at the windows. M. Robled's bony corpse was lying naked upon the operating table, and M. Grulois was so used to regarding him as a corpse before his death, that he now appeared to him to be alive, chiefly because of the determined expression upon his features. A young man in a white gown and rubber gloves made a long incision at the throat, probed about, and lifted out the red tumour, which let fall a drop of blood upon M.

Robled's emaciated chest. The size of this parasite, containing the life of the man it had killed, showed how great his suffering had been. In his gloved hand the dissector held up this powerful thing that M. Robled had conquered.

THE TIGHT-WADS

M. Verdier, a gentleman of independent means, who lived at Choisy-le-Roi, was taking his dog for a walk in the public gardens, and, seeing her scratching the earth at the foot of a tree, he snapped his whip: "Not here, Diane; the town is rich enough. Save that for my vegetables."

Two plumbers, who were attending to the piping of the fountain, had thrown aside a little wrought iron cylinder. M. Verdier picked it up, and threw it down one of the paths: "Go get it, Diane!" Then he spoke to the workmen. "I will soon be wanting some work done in my apartment house; and for goodness' sake don't mess things up like the last time! It's always like that when people work in houses that don't belong to them. Something always happens when you have to have work done."

At the end of the garden he picked up the cylinder, as though he were going to throw it again, but put it in his pocket and took it home, where he put it in a box with other odds and ends—old clothes and little pieces of metal. Then he went to Diane's iron food-bowl, which contained a white bone, and scolded the poor thing, who was now lying in her little house with her wet muzzle on the sill: "You lazy brute! Don't

you know yet how to strip a bone? " For there was a thin coating of fat still upon it.

M. Verdier dug his nails into the ash-bin—a tiny one, for they never threw much away—to make sure there were no cinders that could be used over again. Then he called out:

" Mme. Verdier! Put the tops of the leeks into Diane's mush," to which she replied promptly from her kitchen, which was hung with heavy copper utensils:

" That only uses more coal, and when they're cooked they're as hard as pieces of wood and stick in her throat. She no sooner eats them than up they come again, so what's the use? "

At the end of the avenue, a huckster began to cry his wares. M. Verdier opened the garden gate, and watched the bony horse slowly approaching him, to the accompaniment of " Rabbit skins! Rabbit skins! " in a strong Limousin accent.

While he waited, M. Verdier shrugged his shoulders in scornful contemplation of his tenants, who always threw away their potato-skins, and other things too which were much more precious, to judge by Diane's delighted rummaging,—she was let loose at this profitable moment,—in the feast of garbage. She brought back a bone to enjoy at her leisure, but her master took it from her and put it in his box of odds and ends.

The huckster greeted his old client, and stopped his wagon, which had rabbit skins, with the hair brushed the wrong way, hanging from the lantern brackets. He lifted out the filthy contents of the box with his greasy hands, and made his offer:

"Three sous."

M. Verdier sorted over the objects. "The bone's the cheapest thing there, and it's worth a sou. You want too much. There are plenty of other buyers. Four sous."

Rabbit Skin wanted to split the difference. "Three and a half sous. I'll even up with you for the half-sou next time I come."

M. Verdier stopped him from turning the box upside down, and made him lift the things out. "Don't stir them up!"

The greasy sides and bottom were covered with a thick layer of maggots, which he used for bait, and he often obliged his fellow fishermen with a sou's worth or two when they had run short of it.

When he had put through his deal with Rabbit Skin, M. Verdier shovelled some manure around a lilac bush, from a bucket which he carried with him when he went driving in his little carriage. In this he collected his horse's manure, for he had trained Musketeer so well that when his tail went up he came to a halt, and it wasn't necessary to get out and run back along

the road. He said to himself, " If the roads are dirty, it's not my fault."

M. Verdier went indoors to get warm, though the movable stove, pushed around through the ground-floor rooms by Mme. Verdier, contained the tiniest of fires. Then, in obedience to a long-established habit, he lay down upon his bed for a moment, with all his clothes on, for a chat with his wife. She was fifty years old, and so thin that she seemed like the cord attached to her little round balloon of a husband. He mentioned a leakage:

" The tap in the kitchen is dropping, and it shows on the metre. A sou soon goes that way. If you're careful of sous you'll never be poor. At the beginning, Mme. Verdier, I made up my mind to try to be a sou richer each day."

They called each other Monsieur and Madame, because their business, " Wines and Liquors, Wholesale and Retail," had obliged them to, for thirty years, and it had now become a habit.

M. Verdier was good at making people drink, and he had won thousands of aperitives and half-pints of wine by playing Zanzi. For this reason, at the age of fifty-two, he had great difficulty in walking, and found himself the father of a twenty-five-year-old government clerk, who earned two thousand francs a month, and who, to purge his system of the alcoholic inheritance which had left him with no hair at the

age of twenty-five, was condemned to drinking nothing but mineral water.

"I'm going to make some changes in the bathroom," announced Mme. Verdier. She made use of this convenience once a month during the summer, and in the winter there were pots of geraniums in the bathtubs, the watering of which kept the enamel from forgetting what water felt like.

The tenants who had paid their rent promptly were offered this privilege, "Would you like to see the bathroom?"

M. Verdier, thoroughly warm again, began to go over the weekly accounts: "Rolls . . . three sous. We get bread by the loaf, Mme. Verdier, and what's the use in spending three sous when there are loaves in the house? You don't get rich by *making* money; the thing to do is to *save* it, every sou! If the tenants want bread to take with them when they go out walking, give them some off the loaf at four sous a pound. Those three rolls didn't weigh a half-pound."

Mme. Verdier, who always got the makings of a bread pudding, or Diane's mush, from the table scrapings and left-over crusts, was, however, anxious to excuse herself further, and asked her husband's advice about another economy. "I've got two egg-shells from yesterday. Haven't you anything to clean? I've done my decanters, and I hate throwing away perfectly good egg-shells."

M. Verdier was ready with two suggestions. "They can be used to keep the fire in, or you might crush them for polishing your brasses. That would save sand."

The bell rang, and Diane barked loudly. M. Verdier looked through the curtains, and saw that it was M. Mercerin. "Mme. Verdier, you'll have to tell him I'm not here. I know what he wants, and I won't go on the Town Council. No thank you! Look at the clothes I'd have to buy; and after the meetings each member has to stand for a round of drinks. And there are collections for the poor. You've got to count on making a big hole in a hundred-franc note every year. I pay my taxes; why don't they leave me alone?"

M. Jules Verdier arrived by the twelve-seven train, and a smile spread over his puffy face at the thought of anyone giving time and money to the Town Council. He had more serious matters to talk about:

"I saw my boss to-day, and I'm going to have a raise at the end of the year; probably a hundred and fifty francs."

His round face,—as expressive as a piece of blank paper, three holes in a ball,—proclaimed the complete emptiness of his head; his father had not dared to spend the money for his education! He was incapable of doing anything except under orders, but he had in-

herited from his father the enjoyment of counting the sous he saved.

M. Verdier consulted him every month as to the investment of his yearly saving of eleven thousand francs out of an income of fifteen thousand.

In a slow, effeminate voice M. Jules told him the day's quotations, and then his father held forth a little on the general question of investment: "You must never lend to private individuals, even to the most industrious, for they are likely to get ill from overwork. If you want your money to be safe, put it in concerns that can't blow up, like the Government, or one of the big Banks. If God wanted me to lend him money, I'd do it, but not to men. Buy me ninety francs of income in 1919 Russian Loan 4½ percents at 100.45."

M. Jules added it up: "2009 francs."

A MAN WITH A SOFT JOB

One afternoon at three o'clock M. Prosper-Paul Maché, the well-known author, went to see M. Karl-Albert George, who welcomed him with apparent delight.

"Hello, Prosper-Paul! I'm awfully glad to see you."

He took the outstretched hand in both of his own, as though to warm it, and smiled affectionately. His big black eyes opened wide with astonishment at the sight of his friend, and the welcoming words fell rapidly and distinctly from his clean-shaven lips.

M. Prosper-Paul Maché had been clean-shaven two days before, and he was bald, except for a wreath of long hair on a level with his ears, which kept his coat collar in a continual state of filthiness. One would have thought that, with the fortune he was known to possess, he could have afforded a higher standard of personal appearance. He sat in the proffered chair like a hunting dog, for his back was tired. Writing was his sole occupation, and he got out of his bed to sit down in his chair. Now he crossed his legs nervously, and grasped his right foot with his left hand, then he changed his mind, and seized hold of his left one with his right hand.

The welcoming smile died out of M. Karl-Albert George's face, and was replaced by a fresh set of wrinkles upon his serious brow. He brought the palm of his hand down upon a pile of manuscript, and said:

"I've read it, and in my opinion you have given us there a very beautiful thing. I was greatly moved by it. That man who, when his son reaches the age of puberty, fears that he may contract some disease, and orders him to indulge in sexual intercourse with his mother, so that her splendid health,—reproduced in him,—may maintain his purity . . . ah, the astounding reality of those four acts of yours! Astounding! And those amazing scenes between that selfish brute of a son, who is blind to everything but his own personal pleasure, and the father, who has the future of his family at heart! I know of nothing to compare with it in French literature."

A man-servant entered, and spoke stiffly from the doorway:

"The carpenter you sent for is here, sir."

"Let him come in at once," said M. Karl-Albert George delightedly, again taking one of his friend's hands between both of his own. M. Prosper-Paul stopped smiling and looked at his shoes.

"I do beg your pardon, Prosper-Paul, but there's something here that nearly drives me mad. The shelf of this bookcase is loose. Listen: *toc* . . . *toc.* . . . It does that whenever I touch it, and I can't

keep my hands off it. It's impossible to do any work! "

He seemed to be suffering agonies; his long white fingers clasped and unclasped, and he put his feet alternately one on top of the other.

A tool-box bumped against the door, and the carpenter waited, at the edge of the carpet, for someone to tell him what to do, devouring the rich furnishings with bright mischievous eyes. His black hair was full of little curled shavings, and he was undoubtedly a real wit. One felt that he was smiling inwardly, and he pursed his lips as though to whistle.

" This way, my friend," said M. Karl-Albert George, and he placed his shiny pink finger nails upon the edge of the loose board, which brought on another attack of nerves.

" It's the bracket wants straightening," announced the carpenter, " or mebbe the shelf's warped. I'll see to it." He set his tool-box down on the carpet, and slowly began to take out his tools, that gleamed as brightly as M. Karl-Albert George's finger nails.

M. Prosper-Paul Maché scratched his head, and, finding a loose piece of skin, he held it like a pinch of snuff between his thumb and forefinger, close to his near-sighted eyes, and examined it with satisfaction.

" Let's go into my little study," said M. Karl-Albert George, collecting some pages of manuscript from the desk, and continuing his praises:

"That splendid fourth act, where the father threatens to call down maledictions upon his rebellious son, is so full of emotion that . . . so full of emo*tion* . . ." He made up for the recalcitrant phrase by a resounding emphasis on the last syllable, which he brought forth with great fervour, raising his eyes to the ceiling, and placing one hand upon his breast.

M. Prosper-Paul Maché, though he was on his feet, still sagged appallingly. His knees were slightly bent, and his spine curved languidly.

"However . . ." continued M. Karl-Albert George; but the door closed upon his friend's drooping figure, and nothing more could be heard.

The carpenter, kneeling beside his array of tools, took up his plane, which was at the right, and set it down again on the left. Then he rose slowly to his feet, tapped the books on the shelf gently, and spoke to the man-servant:

"Them's got to come out!"

"I'm not stopping you from moving them, am I?" replied M. Jean, who had thrown himself into the chair where M. Prosper-Paul Maché had been sitting. He was doing his finger nails, and flicked off the pieces that fell on to his yellow and black striped waistcoat.

"I'd like to put me feet in your shoes," said the workman. "I'm a carpenter, and does me work by

th' hour." With great care he took six books from the shelf, and threw them across the carpet.

M. Jean shut up his knife:

"You workmen are impossible! There'd have to be a crying need before I'd have one in any house of mine. Books, my friend, aren't chunks of wood! They're supposed to be handled carefully. You've got to take them out in order, so that they can be put back in order. Do you get me? In order!"

"That ain't nothin' to do with me. I'm a carpenter."

The man-servant felt it to be beneath his dignity to insist, so he began to remove them himself. The carpenter watched him for a moment; then he said:

"I don't mind helpin' ye. Your job's a heavy one, eh? Lucky guy, to be able to set on somethin' soft now and then. When do ye quit, nights? Is he bad-tempered, yer boss?"

M. Jean replied by making a face,—his lips were twisted anyhow, from his constant habit of sneering,—and thereby reserved his opinion of M. Karl-Albert George, and avoided becoming confidential with a social inferior.

"Oh, the bosses we fellas has to work for is all alike," declared the carpenter; "ye've got to want work awful bad to do it. Is yours the one was sittin' where you are?" And he pointed to the chair M. Prosper-Paul Maché had occupied.

M. Jean shrugged his shoulders scornfully at the idea of anyone being unable to distinguish between the master of the house and a visitor.

"Ah, then it's the other," deduced the carpenter, "the guy that was sayin' he was full of emo*tion*." He ended the word with the same resounding emphasis, and struck an attitude surprisingly like that of M. Jean's master.

The man-servant and the workman took their time over the books, transporting them by a chain of operations from the shelf to the carpet. M. Jean stood by the bookcase, and the carpenter squatted Turkish fashion on the floor. He asked:

"What's yer boss do?"

"Dramatic critic," was the condescending answer.

"What the hell kind of a job's that?"

The carpenter had to answer himself:

"He's an actor, what! Perhaps he knows a butty o' mine, who gits thirty sous a night for playin' the titled gentlemen at the Porte Saint-Martin."

M. Jean again shrugged his shoulders, and this time the carpenter was angry:

"I gives ye a hand 'cause ye're tired, and now I can't get a word out o' ye. I ask ye now politely, what the hell is it ye're sayin'?"

"A dramatic critic, my friend, is a person who goes to see plays, and says what he thinks of them."

The workman burst into a roar of laughter, and held his sides; then he said pleasantly:

"Ever get yer mouth smashed? Some guy ought to do it fer ye."

"You came here to fix that shelf, didn't you?" sneered M. Jean, and the left corner of his mouth curled upwards. He held out a book to the workman impatiently.

"Gently, me boy, gently. We ain't doin' time here, and I ain't the man to split a gut when there's no call to. Don't I got to stop when I laughs? Yer pullin' me leg; goin' to theaiters ain't workin'. A guy 'u'd be a damn fool to believe that kind o' bull."

M. Jean turned his back, and wobbled the half-empty shelf:

"Are you going to be able to fix that?"

"I know me business; there's nobody can tell me what to do. I done jobs in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and that's why they calls me Bastille. But me real name's Martin, Jules Martin."

They continued in silence, until the last book was laid on the carpet. Then the carpenter got up, wobbled the shelf, and studied it from every angle.

"Have you got much to do to it," asked the man-servant, "and are going to dirty up the whole room?"

"A job can always be done without makin' a mess. There ain't goin' to be a single shavin' on yer damn

carpet. Now off with ye, if ye're too stuck up to tell me what yer boss's job is; I've got work to do."

He lifted the shelf to the floor, and, placing his knee upon it, took up his plane. M. Jean changed his manner:

"Really, I'm not joking. It's my master's business to go to plays, and then write his opinion of them. Here's his last article." He opened a newspaper, and read aloud in a patronizing voice:

"'M. Matulu's play, *La Femme Triomphale,* is a splendid achievement. Bravo! Matulu! The third act is masterly; there is no conscious striving after literary perfection, and at the same time we find passion and fury depicted there, with consummate dramatic art. . . .' I do not hold my master's opinion of the third act of *La Femme Triomphale,*" he said. "The play is evidently a splendid one. However . . ."

"And he gets paid money," demanded Martin in bewilderment, "fer goin' an' settin' in a theaiter?"

"He makes a great deal of money."

M. Jean enjoyed the effect he was making with his exaggerated account of his master's wealth, and the carpenter could scarcely contain his indignation:

"What a job to give a guy!" Then he replaced the warped shelf, reversing its old position, so that the four corners rested firmly upon the brackets, and began to collect his tools.

"Have you finished?" cried M. Jean, incredulously,

trying in vain to wobble the shelf. "I guess you know your business," he added.

Martin puffed out his chest:

"I've worked in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and this ain't empty." He tapped his forehead with a stiff forefinger.

M. Karl-Albert George emerged from his study, on his way to the door with M. Prosper-Paul Maché, and he darted across the room to feel the shelf; a sigh of relief escaped him when it refused to wobble under the pressure of his hand.

"Well done, my friend," he said to Martin, "very nicely done!" And, smiling with satisfaction, he followed M. Prosper-Paul Maché out of the room.

Martin leaned back against the bookcase and burst into gales of laughter, holding his sides with both hands, and opening wide his great big-toothed mouth.

"When you're done spluttering all over me, you can put those books back in their places," announced M. Jean, and Martin's laughter came to a sudden stop. He crossed his arms before replying:

"Aw, you expect too much of a fella. Look, I've been hangin' around here fer two hours, and my boss'll be expectin' me back. You ain't the only folks as needs the carpenter."

He strapped his tool-box on to his shoulder, and, struggling bravely to keep back a fresh torrent of laughter, he repeated:

"And he gets paid money fer that!"

His cheeks were bulging precariously as he went out, and M. Jean saw him flop down on a bench by the sidewalk, where he gave full rein to his merriment, and wiped his eyes on his coat sleeve.

GRACIEUSE

GRACIEUSE was the daughter of old Mother Courli, who had lived for the last fifteen years in the rue Rébeval. Mother Courli was well aware that to wander aimlessly in the streets spelled ruin for little girls, and she passed this knowledge on to her daughter, whom she sent to learn how to make funeral wreaths.

" Don't ever stop to look at store windows, or when someone tries to talk to you. Don't slow up for anything! " So Gracieuse never slowed up, and she made free use of the only insult she knew, " Horrid thing! ", when men spoke to her because they wanted her fragrant young body. Her skin was like mother-of-pearl, and seemed transparent, and her pretty blue eyes were always laughing.

Her father had been pensioned by a big company, and since his death Mme. Courli received half the money. Every three months, she went through the copper-handled doors, and sat down for an hour on a cloth-covered bench in front of a barred window. Then she thanked a speechless cashier,—with white hair and red eyes,—for her hundred francs.

Gracieuse was soon earning twenty-five sous a day,

and she liked her job, for she could steal ribbon. When she went to deliver a straw wheel covered with everlasting, she said to the boy who carried it for her, "Roll it. It's much easier!" And she took along an extra six or eight inches of moiré, for she was clever at doing bows over again.

On Sundays she set forth all covered with funeral ribbons, and there was a pink cord drawn through her dun-coloured chignon, that shook when she laughed her little birdlike laugh. The wind played with the tufts of hair at her neck that were too short to be held in place by her comb. And she had a red ribbon tied round her neck. Children in the street stroked her white belt, and untied the blue ribbon bows at her nimble feet.

In the spring she became a different person. Someone tipped her a franc and she ate fifteen ices at the Place de la Bastille which cost her fifteen sous, and then went up the July Column to see if it really moved to and fro. Her mistress was cross at her for being late, but added, "Well, anyhow, does it move?"

"I don't know. When I got there, I forgot all about it!" She seemed to have no control over her feet, and always wanted to run. Her mother was worn out with her endless fidgeting, and gave up walking arm in arm with her: "If you don't keep still, child, bad luck'll come to you!"

One Sunday at the Buttes-Chaumont, delighted with a fresh outfit of ribbon bows, she was cutting capers around a bed of irises, standing proudly behind their guard of green sabre blades, when she suddenly noticed a boy of sixteen devouring her with his black eyes. She had no desire to run, and the next day he met her again on her way to the workroom.

"Hello, Mademoiselle Claire!"

"No," she answered, "I'm Gracieuse."

"And I'm Paul . . . Andry."

They told each other where they worked; he, in a studio where scenery was painted. That was his excuse for wearing an enormous necktie and bulging trousers, and for allowing his beautiful hair to grow so long.

Gracieuse adored being loved, those summer evenings in the moonlight,—generally fatal to girls of fifteen,—and she found the longest walks she could. What weather! Then came two weeks of rain, but it was too late. She was going to have a baby! Her anxiety was unbounded. In two months there would be the festival of Saint-Fargeau. Would she be able to dance?

"Sure thing," said one of her friends, "and dancing'll unload you, too!" Then she learned of other methods besides dancing.

On Sunday, Paul Andry bought five sous' worth of

absinth and mixed it with half a litre of white wine, and he took Gracieuse to his studio, reeking with pipe-smoke, where they could be alone. He made her sit by the cold stove, with its pipe zigzagging up to the ceiling, and he held the bottle to her lips. She drank it all, and it made her drunk, and sick after that. Then she began to cry, for at the bottom of her muddled little mind there was always that fear of missing the festival. Paul took her to her door, and then escaped.

Mother Courli saw what the trouble was, when she put her to bed, and was heartbroken by the grievous discovery. Gracieuse slept for twelve solid hours, and then woke up with the words: "I'm thirsty."

"You don't deserve anything but water," said her mother.

This produced a pouting declaration: "All right, I'll drown myself!" And she went off to the caresses of her little scene-painter; but it took her three days to find him.

"It's all your fault," he said to her. "You left me on Sunday without making a date!" And she saw him looking over her head at other girls.

When she got home, her mind was a tangle of spitefulness and humility. She missed sitting on her mother's knees terribly. But Mme. Courli had no more smiles for her, and Gracieuse was in despair.

She lost four pounds in two weeks, and her eyes looked enormous in her little sunken face.

With hands clasped, she beseeched: "Mama, talk to me, please! If you don't, I swear I'll drown myself!" Then they wept in each other's arms.

"If he was a man," complained her mother, "he could look after you. But he's only sixteen. His people won't give him a sou. They don't earn much, and the father's drunk all the time. It'll cost you money to raise that kid!"

Paul Andry found another job, in a wall-paper factory near Bel-Air, and took a room in the Twelfth Arrondissement.

Gracieuse was unable to walk that far, and she asked a neighbour to lend her the money for her bus fare. Some friends warned her: "Throw him over. He's going with a feather-dresser now from the Sentier."

But she stuck to his trail and, one evening, found him straightening his tie before a shirt-maker's mirror in the rue Saint-Denis. She had been running, and her soaking underwear got cold and made her shiver. Chilled to the bone and thoroughly miserable, she told him, "I know perfectly well who you're waiting for. You haven't any feelings at all!"

Paul wasn't really so bad; he bought her some of Father Coupe Toujours' cake, gave her ten francs, and saw her as far as the Place de la République, promis-

ing her everything she wanted. But he kept looking at his watch.

She climbed the Faubourg du Temple again, without looking where she was going; a driver had to stop his bus to avoid knocking her down, and swore violently at her, and the fear of getting killed made her think of ending her life. But not under a bus!

She stood at the edge of the canal, and watched the people passing; everybody looked ugly and careworn. She had been happy up to now, and for her the world had contained nothing but happiness; now there was only sadness. Her despair evoked the memory of an experience of her childhood. When she was only five, she wanted to have black eyes, and her hands had to be held to stop her from scratching out her pretty blue ones.

She wandered along, looking for a good place to jump from. A filthy mass of sewerage had collected around a small boat moored to the side of the canal. Not in that! . . .

Opposite the Customs the water pleased her, but too many people were passing. She was afraid to kill herself, but she longed to die, and wished she could shut her eyes and have someone push her.

To have to hesitate and choose the right place prevented her from doing anything; quick impulsive action was the only kind she knew.

And suddenly she ran home to Mother Courli to

say, "I almost drowned myself! It wouldn't have taken much more . . ."

"Cheer up, Dearie. *Ça ira!*"

And Gracieuse sang her mother's hopeful words:

"*Ça ira! Ça ira!*"

MADEMOISELLE SOURIRE *

Mademoiselle Sourire was reading the written notices pasted under the little arches of the Porte Saint-Denis, where the old stonework was practically hidden beneath a garment of paper:

106, Faubourg du Temple
Good hands required for forget-me-nots.

238, Rue Réaumur
Dubois & Cie., waist-makers.

Big Marcelle laid a hand, which bore two rings, upon Mademoiselle Sourire's shoulder, "What about it?" She was filled with pity for herself and the other women, raised up on the toes of their well-worn shoes, searching for the work they required. Were there going to be many steps to climb? "When a forewoman has all the help she wants, she don't come and pull down her notice; it stays until it gets covered by somebody else's. Ye've got to come early and see it bein' stuck up, and then go off right away to the address. I used to do that."

* *Mademoiselle Sourire,* "Miss Smile."

"If ye wait around here, ye're bothered to death by these rotten men. They know us girls come here because we ain't got no work."

Big Marcelle mentioned one of the advantages of complaisance. "Anyhow, you'd get somethin' t' eat!" She detached this predominant truth: "You've got to eat!"

Mademoiselle Sourire pushed a lock of her black hair back into its place, and explained how she made her living: "It 'ud be terrible to get took up by these men. It's much better to take any job ye find here, whatever it is. When ye've got no special line, ye've got to take what ye can get. Yesterday I was sewin' babies' dresses. To-day I didn't get no more of them to do, but I don't mind, because the pay was only sixteen sous each, and only three rows of lace around the skirt, and neck, and cuffs. Me mother does shoes, but it's too dirty for me. Whenever the kids come anywhere near her, they get black all over. I've made flowers, but the boss always tries to fleece ye. They tell ye to leave samples of yer work, and send ye away promisin' to send ye more work, but nothin' ever comes. He keeps the samples. If twelve girls was to come in one day to do violets, and each one done a dozen, he 'ud have twelve dozen without payin' a sou. A month ago I went to a feather-dresser in the Passage des Petites-Ecuries, and she made me get two wings and mount 'em, to show me work. I asked

her if they was all right, and she said, 'Yes, and I'll send ye some more to do.' But I kept me two wings and said I'd bring 'em back when I finished the work she was goin' to send me."

Big Marcelle shrugged her shoulders beneath an old feather scarf:

"It ain't so silly for us to call ye Sourire; there's smiles there all right. Ye'd be a pretty brunette if ye didn't frown so much and take life so hard." Then she went with her to one of the addresses they had taken down. They entered, and stood in the corner of a room full of all sorts of stuffs and materials. There were three sewing-machines, one for the employer, and two for the apprentices, who earned five sous a day at hemming, which was really the work of a regular workwoman.

They were offered lingerie at two sous less per garment than they would have received from the shop, and the forewoman scolded Mademoiselle Sourire for frowning and pursing up her lips.

"Leave it if you don't like it. I don't like people who complain. Who's going to pay for the shoe-leather I wear out going to your rooms if you don't bring the work in on time? And how about the cab to get it and take it back to the shop? You save your bus fare and your time because you live near by; and I don't keep you waiting. Go have a look round, and see if you can do better somewhere else." Then

she mentioned another possibility. "If it isn't enough money, you'll have no trouble to earn what you need. It isn't as if you were a man, and could only work in the daytime. You've got another iron in the fire; ask your friend whether she doesn't know how to use it."

When they were outside, Big Marcelle spoke gently: "Come along and I'll treat ye to a cup of coffee. Ye've got a lovely skin and a good figure, and if ye ate all ye wanted every day in the week ye'd be nice and healthy looking. I know ye'd rather die than have a man hangin' around, but your mother wouldn't have ye locked up; ye're eighteen. Remember that little burnisher? When she was twelve and a half she used to run around with men, instead of goin' to the work-school. The Sisters came to talk to her people, but it was too late. They wanted to put her in a work-school at Versailles, to change her way of livin', but it wasn't an easy thing to get her there. Her big brother said he'd take her to visit the Château, and she started out, happy as you please, in her prettiest dress. But when she found herself in the waitin'-room of the school, she turned on him, callin' him all sorts o' bad names, screamin' that she'd starve herself if he left her there, and she wouldn't say good-bye. But one of the Sisters, all in white, with eyes as clear as tumblers of water, came and talked nicely to her, and ten minutes later she told her

brother she was sorry, and kissed him, and told him to give her mother a kiss, too. She's back again now, but she goes every Sunday to Versailles to see Sister Cecile. When she has no money to buy her ticket, she cries. Once she walked all the way, and the Sister gave her another pair of shoes and paid her way back by train."

Big Marcelle felt no regrets for herself while telling her friend of the little burnisher, and she proceeded to talk about the necessaries of life: "There's got to be a lot of women in Paris, and there's plenty who go the pace, young and old: them that walks the streets every day, and them that does it only on Saturdays, because their jobs don't bring them a livin'. Any woman can find one or two men! There's always plenty of 'em. They come to Paris from everywhere! And there are women in the houses from Belgium, and Germany, and every country."

She threw off her final estimate: "It's a rotten hole, Paris!" as she might have said, "It rains a lot in Paris." Then her thoughts went back to the Sisters: "I used to know 'em too at the school, and they liked me. When I was little, I was pretty, and I always tried to be a good girl. I wasn't never like the others, only goin' there to complain, and make fun of the Sisters. I liked them to kiss me, but now they know I run around with men, and they never speak to me. They ought to know a woman does what she

can. We can't all be Sisters." And she went on to say how she liked going to church, and praying and clasping her hands. Then she began to be concerned about the fate of Mademoiselle Sourire:

"Ye'll kill yourself if ye keep on working like this for fifteen sous a day!" and she added authoritatively, "If I was your mother I'd box your ears."

Mademoiselle Sourire started to recount her troubles: "The worst of all is me father. When I finishes me work I got to hide it with the people next door. If he sees me goin' to get me pay, he drinks up all his money right off. I try to shame him because he can't support us, but when he's drunk he says, 'I could if I wanted to; a man can do anything. And he doesn't try to do what's impossible.' And I've got to understand that. When he ain't so drunk he slaps me in the face. And I'm in specially hard luck now; there's a rotten forewoman where I work: she ain't even worth scratchin'. She gives a little more than enough lace for the trimming to the ones she likes, but she wouldn't give me an extra centimetre. Always just the allowance, and no more. I ain't goin' back, because I hate injustice, but I guess I'll have to take it on again soon."

Was she crying?

A little new moon was climbing the sky, growing brighter as the daylight faded; it seemed as tiny as a crescent you'd buy at the baker's for a sou, and

Big Marcelle longed to possess it; she would wear it in her hair.

It was almost dinner time, and the rue de Belleville was full of children clasping loaves of bread as tall as they were themselves, and little girls with twisted hair-ribbons, carrying litres of wine, like soldiers presenting arms, and milk bottles containing six sous' worth of steaming bouillon.

Mademoiselle Sourire was thinking of her obligations at home: "If me mother's been shoemakin' instead of lightin' the fire, the kids'll be hungry, and I promised 'em a stick of nougat. When I ain't got money or work, they can't understand it. They'll start bawlin', and then father'll be after 'em with a stick."

"Don't worry, Dearie," said Big Marcelle, and she gave her three francs, and bought ten sous' worth of some sticky candy.

Then they went to Mademoiselle Sourire's home, a ground floor room giving on to the court, where a woman of about forty was hurrying to finish the shoe she was working on. Two little children were playing among the scattered shoes, between a washtub and a tall cupboard with doors as thin as cigar-box wood, which, somehow, was the family bread-box.

In an old jar that had once contained candy two goldfish were nibbling bread-crumbs. The surface of the water trembled with a vibration that shook the

windows and everything in the room. Mademoiselle Sourire explained what this was:

" There's someone with eight sewin' machines above us, and they're goin' the whole day long. The ceiling comes down on us in pieces, but I've got to be nice to her because she gives me work sometimes. She's on to all the tricks of the trade. Every season she gets hold of a model, and then goes around to all the shops. Last year she found a little girl's summer dress, and placed it with one of the big ones. She started makin' in November, and for seven months she never stopped; she gave out the work too, but always the same model. The only change was in the colour of the stuff and the kind of lace. And there was some Germans who bought it off her to take home with 'em."

Big Marcelle took the little boy by the hand: " You ain't forgotten me, little Hustler? "

They called him that because he was a seven-months' baby. Beneath a stubborn head of hair, his solemn little face was smeared with shoe-blacking. His mother adored him: " He loves to bite the shoes like a little dog. Ye can see the marks of his teeth. Look! "

Little Christiane showed her a pipe, with a piece of cloth wrapped around the stem, and begged a kiss for it, her youngest child.

Big Marcelle put the candy on the table, with its

edges bent down by the weight of many elbows, and the children gazed with eyes like saucers at this unexpected delight. Mademoiselle Sourire spoke to them gently, and the deep lines in her poor tired face softened a little:

"They ain't used to things like this. Well, it's for you! Say 'Thank you' to the pretty lady." Then she took Big Marcelle out again into the passage.

"It's a good thing I can earn a few crusts with that machine of mine; it's an old wreck I won in a lottery, and so hard to run that it almost breaks me legs. Me father drinks up all he earns, and we're left to make out for ourselves. I often feel like chuckin' the whole thing, and I would if it wasn't for them kids. Ain't they darlin's? Ye'll come and see 'em sometime, when I get a chance to clean them up?"

Big Marcelle was reproachful: "Ye've got no feelin's at all! If ye wasn't so damned decent, they'd always be happy. Ye'll have bad luck if ye walk such a straight line!"

Mademoiselle Sourire hung her head:

"I know it. When me mother was sick, I had to get meat twice on credit. The woman next door said, 'No work, but the butcher brings the meat just the same.' As if I'd gotten it that way!"

Big Marcelle was surprised. "And the little feather-dresser with the friend that used to come every Sunday?"

Mademoiselle Sourire looked at her, wide-eyed:

"Oh! No! She was a nice little thing! Her friend left her in trouble, and she couldn't pay the midwife who saw her through. She went down to the river, and it was funny nobody noticin' her, because it was broad daylight. She'd gone so thin that the water hardly went *plouf!*"

THE SEINE RISES

(January, 1910)

It had been raining for a week. The factory hands at Choisy-le-Roi were obliged to put on wet shoes every morning, and the cobblers, crouching in their little stalls, did a good re-soling business. The succession of sunless days made everybody bad-tempered.

People looked out the first thing in the morning to see if it was still raining. It was always raining!

M. Gaston Mécoeur, a clerk living in the Gondoles quarter, set forth from his little house in the avenue Pompadour, frowning and pushing his umbrella into a head wind. He was going to the station to catch his regular train, the seven-twenty-three, which got him to the bank, where he was chief clerk, at eight o'clock.

He stopped on the bridge, worried by the height and rapidity of the yellow water passing beneath him; it had just begun to wet the stacks of bricks on the river bank, which was low at this point. Then a gust of wind blew the rain down his neck, and he complained bitterly to M. Lortieux, who went by the same train, *his* train, to work at the cravat counter in the Galeries Saint-Michel.

"Yes," said M. Lortieux, "it *is* coming down! We didn't think the Seine would overflow, did we? But here it is. Some water! Those coal stacks will soon be in the soup, and it'll be tough going for the fellows who have empty cellars, believe me!"

An old man began to tell what he remembered:

"In '76 the whole quarter was under water, but at that time the avenue Pompadour was only a country road. Now there are three thousand people here! If it should happen again! . . ."

Most of the clerks shrugged their shoulders, because in their modern minds there was no room for the fear of impending tragedy. They were concerned with things of regular occurrence, like cravats and figures.

In the third-class compartments, separated only by the backs of the benches, there was always someone standing at the door watching the water, which came up close to the track and flooded the lilac nurseries.

A young man was reading aloud from a newspaper. His two friends listened; one, however, was barely awake, and snored a little when he breathed. An old clerk from the post office, who was wearing an academic decoration, became vexed at the unaccustomed noise, and lowered his paper to glower in silent rage at the cause of his annoyance.

" . . . *Yesterday morning in Paris the water reached 4.62 metres at the Pont des Tournelles and*

5.76 metres at the Pont-Royal. During the day the level went up very regularly at the rate of eight centimetres an hour. A rise of at least a metre must be expected in Paris to-day, probably 1.25 metres, perhaps 1.50 metres."

The train pulled into the station, and from all the doors, simultaneously thrown open, the suburbanites stepped down from the foot-board to the platform with the agility of long habit. They met again in the evening, to catch the seven-eleven, with their collars darkened by a day's wear; otherwise they looked as fresh as in the morning, since their work was clean and sedentary. There were only a few factory hands among them, for in order to live in the suburbs it was essential to have steady jobs the year round.

M. Mécoeur, M. Lortieux, and two of their friends, who lived in Choisy, played cards on the way home, and some millinery girls, about sixteen years old, were retailing work-room gossip, gesturing rapidly with their wan little hands.

On the Choisy bridge, some people leaned over the railing to watch the bridge piers cleaving the rushing water, and their exclamations agitated the passengers who lived in the Gondoles quarter.

"The town crier says you must leave your houses!"

M. Mécoeur, startled by this extraordinary injunc-

tion, delivered himself: "A fat chance! Danger, hell!"

Five hundred metres further along, the water, flowing over the lumber yards on the river banks, had advanced as far as the Villeneuve line. Once it had passed this slight ridge, the inundation of the whole quarter would follow, and this took place at one o'clock in the morning. People were awakened by the noise of the cascade into their cellars, and they hurried to the windows to call to their neighbours. It was still raining persistently. A man passed down the street, running through the water with slow, awkward steps, and the lights that began to shine from the windows were reflected in the street.

Panic took possession of those who were unable to escape; the mere act of running somewhere would have been such a relief.

At about three o'clock, two men came down the street pushing a shallow boat with a gaff. They passed along from lamp to lamp, where the water was deepest. A clerk's wife, leaning from the window of her house, which had only a ground floor, recognized Joseph Bois, a barrel-maker, who was known for his strength and for being King of the Choisy Water Sports for the last two years, and with him she saw Charlet, the mover.

In a doleful voice she begged, "Come get us, the water's above the floor!"

The clerk brought out an armful of bedding, walking tiptoe, so as to keep his hairy legs as much out of the water as possible, and at the gutter he went in up to his knees. Shaking with fear, he went back for another load, but when he returned Joseph Bois had to tell him, "She won't hold any more, me boy; we'll have to come back."

Then M. Jolimetz, the wood-merchant, sent his powerful dray-horses splashing down the street, with trucks which his men drove up close to the houses where conveyance was requested. After three rounds they came back empty; the daylight had reassured everybody, the people stayed where they were, or simply went upstairs to their neighbours above. The six policemen of Choisy built a big bonfire at the edge of the water, and when the men had warmed themselves they said it was only a wave.

The lamp-lighter, who came to turn off the gas, leaned upon his bamboo stick, to watch the lamps gleaming beyond his reach, and to fret because he could not complete his round.

At five o'clock the Mayor arrived; he was enveloped in an old yellow overcoat, and his face bore an expression of great annoyance. He was afraid of getting wet, and no longer felt the necessity of distinguishing himself, since he had been a knight of the Legion of Honour for two years.

The many factory hands who lived in the flooded

quarter were transported to their work by means of boats and trucks. An anxious crockery worker asked: "Who's going to bring food to the women?"

The Mayor did not disclose any plan. "They'll be looked after."

As soon as the clerks bound for the city were landed, their habitual fear of missing the seven-twenty-three sent them running off in the direction of the station. But it was thirty minutes late, because the softened road-bed had made slow driving necessary. The result was that the passengers for the next one took it too, and they all had to stand up in compartments already filled with commuters from further up the line, who were busily telling each other their night's adventures. One young fellow, with his eyes shining from sleeplessness, kept repeating in a tired voice: "We've been rescuing people! We've been rescuing . . ."

His mouth was close to the faces around him, and his breath, heavy with cognac and coffee, caused people to stand as far away from him as they could: "That ninny of a fireman's trumpeter stood just out of the gravy, and blew his pretty little tune, instead of getting into it and helping us fellows."

M. Gaston Mécoeur was asleep, with his necktie all crumpled, next to a woman who was sympathizing with the parents of a baby with measles. In the middle of the night they had had to take it out, wrapped

in its bedclothes: "Such a cute little thing! And getting along so well, too. A cold on top of measles will be the end of it."

Other people, oblivious to the chattering, were buried in illustrated papers, that showed photographs taken at the worst places. At the Paris stations, where the trains were either late or did not run at all, porters wandered idly up and down the platforms, while the station masters hurried hither and thither, in their attempt to reinstate the tangled schedule. Commuters read, with dismay, the company's notice, saying that it was absolutely unable to guarantee their return trip in the evening. However, the evening trains did run, but at a snail's pace. The water flooded the Choisy station, entirely covering the tracks.

At noon the Gondoles people were famished, and began to fire off guns and revolvers to announce the fact. The Mayor had organized no assistance for them, and the hope that the water would go down delayed efficient methods of feeding, which would have been rendered indispensable by the knowledge that the thing was going to last. And it did last. The policemen moved their bonfire back before the persistently advancing water, which reflected the unlucky houses. A crowd of onlookers obstructed the embarkation of food supplies.

The water's edge divided people into two classes: those for whom the flood was an affliction, and those

for whom it was a sight not to be missed. A young lady arrived in her motor, and was furious at being unable to take a good photograph.

Yarns were told without the slightest foundation, but which might have happened: there were babies over there in the houses, one didn't know just where, who had no milk and no fires to warm them; there were people who had eaten nothing since the day before.

Three men lifted an old man, who was paralysed, from a boat where he had been propped up in an old chair by two dirty cushions. He couldn't move his head, and he rolled his eyes piteously in order to find out what was to become of him. M. Courtois, the commissary, spoke up a little too loudly: "I'll take him to my house." Then he took his place as if in a procession, in front of the chair they were carrying.

A great deal of hospitality, without such fine attitudes, was offered to the flood victims with their bundles of clothes, their canaries, and their wet cats.

Dogs came running to the water's edge, plunged in, and then turned back to bark towards their inaccessible homes.

When the arrogant hospitality of M. Courtois and his like, and that of the less pretentious people, had been made use of, the victims found at their disposal the assistance of the shop-keepers, whose busi-

ness sense prompted them to take this means of adding to their reputation with the public.

The Mayor was pleased with the general initiative, which supplemented his own, and he complimented the community: "Not a victim left in the streets!"

"It'll be all very well for a few days," said M. Verdier, an old miser. "At this moment people are a little blind. They'll regret their hospitality later."

The Mayor became angry at this anticipation of a return to egoism: "It'll last as long as the flood, and the flood isn't going to last."

In the afternoon, a platoon of dragoons arrived and, having dismounted, took up their positions as sentries at the water's edge. No one had told them how to make themselves useful, and they had had hardly any experience. Notices were posted, saying that the Seine would rise forty centimetres during the night. A bargeman tied a piece of wire around one of the lamp-posts, at a point fifty centimetres above the existing level, and stuck some stakes into the ground, at the edge of the water, to verify the rise there. The time for optimistic prophecies had passed; people wanted to know the exact facts.

At seven-thirty that evening, the clerks, returned from Paris, wanted boats to take them to their houses. M. Mécoeur, hoarse from too much talking about the flood, was completely fagged out, and wished to waste no time in getting to bed. Some were terrified at the

predicted rise and hesitated; the sight of people leaving the quarter unsettled the minds of those who were waiting to enter it. But habit was stronger than fear.

A truck came splashing through to dry land, and the dragoons helped out four women, each with a baby. The onlookers came running to the spot:

"How old is he?"

"Ah, it's a little girl!"

"Have you got a change for her?"

Little blue ribbons, on lace caps, moved about, at one end of the white shawl bundles. Anxious, but not desperate, these victims proceeded towards the houses of their friends, with their babies held warmly in a careful embrace. The soldiers collected floating pieces of wood, to keep the fires going. Night came again, increasing the inertia of the tired and soaking men. M. Mécoeur succeeded in getting himself into one of the boats, just ahead of a workman carrying a bottle of milk and a four-pound loaf of bread. He jumped in just as the bargeman pushed off, saying, "If you want food you've got to get it yourself or starve."

"They've sent out dragoons," said the bargeman, "and look at 'em there standing like pickets. What we want is a lot of young fellows who know how to run a boat."

The flooded streets were as silent as an empty church, and the velvety water reflected the lamps that

shone from the windows. No gas reached the houses, or the street lamps, for the mains were full of water. And it was as though the night had sternly commanded silence.

"This is my door," said M. Mécoeur in a low voice, and the only way he could enter it was by means of a plank laid upon two weighted barrels. In the second-floor back room six children were sleeping on piles of bedclothes, and in the front room five women were telling each other things that had been repeated many times. Mme. Mécoeur wept at the arrival of her husband, and one of the other women, with the alert suspicion of the rest of her sex, remarked: "You're all right now, because you've got your man."

M. Mécoeur wanted to go back and warn the others, who were doubtless waiting at the edge of the water, and he went to the window to watch for a boat. The silence of a bottomless abyss was upon the motionless waters. It was strange to hear no sound of trains or wagons, and the stillness was almost audible. A boat passed behind the row of trees on the other side of the street, and M. Mécoeur called out. No reply came from the two men who were in it; they were speaking together in low voices. You could hear the splash of their gaffs, as they glided out of sight into the deep shadows of the houses.

"There's somebody at Libercier's," said one of the women. "I see a light."

One of her companions said it wasn't possible. "They're with his wife's people at Versailles!" Then the truth came to her. "It's thieves in the house, then!"

M. Mécoeur went to get his revolver, and the women put their hands to their ears and begged: "Don't, you'll wake the kiddies." Then other boats glided past in the direction of the abandoned houses.

At five o'clock in the morning M. Mécoeur went downstairs to see if the water had gone down. It had covered two and a half more steps, and the plank by which he had entered the night before was floating about in the flooded room. The women were filled with horror by the revelations of the dawn. Joseph Bois came by, pushing a large boat with four people in it, and M. Mécoeur got in, and began to tell about the pirates of the night before.

"Oh, they're everywhere," said Joseph Bois, "and the first one I catch is going to get his dome smashed in with this oar."

The daylight brought many women, who had been sleeping in safe districts, to the water's edge to look at their abandoned homes, and they loudly lamented the fact that the water had arisen about eight inches above the wire tied around the lamp-post the day before. All the people who could not get to Paris had collected around the station, where the tracks were more than three feet under water. Everything

on wheels had been hitched up, and the trip to Paris cost one franc. Some set out on bicycles, in spite of the muddy roads, and one heroic person proposed to walk the eight kilometres. The commuters, accustomed to fourteen minutes in the train, declared: "You're daffy!" And they fixed it up with the station master to let them take one of the circle trains, leaving in three-quarters of an hour, which would get them to Paris in two hours. It was much slower than walking time, but they would at least be sitting down.

M. Mécoeur, and a good many other clerks, decided not to go at all, for they hoped this would be their only day away from the office. The next day no trains ran at all. Never had such a thing happened before! It couldn't last!

The newspapers published exact accounts of what had already happened, and made grave predictions:

"Yesterday the main sewer of Clichy burst. . . . The Gare Saint-Lazare may be flooded to-day, and there is a still graver possibility: Crevices have been noticed in the Auteuil Viaduct, and it is feared that this structure may fall, thus forming a dangerous barrier which will throw the Seine back upon Paris."

The Mayor's indecision gave way rapidly to unconsidered authority. No one saw him now; from his office came an order for the immediate evacuation of the Gondoles quarter. The Chief of Police explained to the people why this was necessary:

"When there is nobody there, there won't be any theft. No admittance! Anyone trying to prowl around there in a boat, as sure as I'm talking to ye, will get all that's coming to him."

Boats, manned by policemen, called at every door, and the order: "Everyone out!" was explained to the inhabitants good-humouredly, except to those who made a fuss, like Charlet, the mover, who told the policemen to run along and mind their business. The Chief declared: "He wants to stay and make a haul. Look through his pockets."

Thirty sous were found, and some bread-crumbs and an empty cigarette box. "You didn't search me yesterday when men were needed to help the victims," said Charlet. "I kept my boat going for thirty-six hours without stopping. . . ." Then this advice came from the Chief:

"Shut your mouth! You've only got to do the same as the rest of 'em."

When Charlet was landed, he took off his cap and addressed his exasperated companions:

"Look at me! If any one of ye can say I ever stole a sou, let 'im say it! They searched me; they kicked me out of my house. And after I've been helpin' people for two days. Look me over. I'm Charlet the mover."

He turned a haggard face to each of his listeners;

for the last forty-eight hours he had scarcely eaten, washed, or slept.

M. Mécoeur had a big package under his arm. He wore a silk handkerchief around his neck instead of a collar, and stated his objection precisely. "The water can rise fifteen steps before reaching us on the second floor. You might leave us in peace. . . ."

"There'll be room for everybody," replied the Chief roughly. "You'll have everything you want. Get along to the Convent of Thiais. And step lively!"

Some workers from a charitable society were making soup for the women and children who flocked there. The men and a few women stayed to watch the slow arrival of the boats, loaded with ejected families.

When Charlet stopped speaking, a navvy, who had been listening to him with bent head and broad shoulders raised to the level of his ears, denoting deep thought, delivered himself:

"When you ain't good enough to be Mayor, you don't let yourself be nominated. This is all his fault. He done nothin' to help these folks. And now he's fired 'em out of their houses."

At the end of each phrase, he turned abruptly away from his approving auditors, and walked off a little, with his hands dug into the pockets of his voluminous corduroys; then after four steps he came back to begin a fresh one.

"How about Ivry? The Mayor there was into the water up to his neck. He made the bridge builders get busy. Here, we got two dozen dragoons who can't do nothin' but watch the water risin'."

M. Mécoeur also held forth to a sympathetic audience:

"What an administration! A hundred and fifty-eight francs in taxes, and I get thrown out of my house by the police!"

He voiced the usual complaint of his class; from his narrow point of view, it was enough to be orderly and industrious.

People started to tell the scandalous things they knew about the Mayor.

Some members of the Town Council were complaining at the consolidation of all the relief committees, according to the crier's announcement:

"The clergy have put it over on us this time! Here we are, forced to work with them, if I may say that much to their credit. They'll say they did it all, and they'll get decorated."

Before noon the Mayor walked past the muttering populace with his nose in the air. Ducq, an employee of the Gas Company, tried to engage him in conversation;

"What's it to you if I stay in my house? And s'pose I want to croak there? I'm a free man, ain't I? . . ."

The Chief of Police came running up, puffing with exhaustion, and took Ducq by the arms: "It's you for the lock-up!"

Ducq collapsed: "I'm all right. I ain't sayin' anything." He was very miserable, because for two years he had gotten up at three o'clock in the morning, and, from then until seven, when he went off to his work, he had built the walls of his little house, brick by brick, on a piece of ground that had cost him three francs a metre. He had spent the savings of his whole life on it, and now it was gone. He was forty-three, and could never build it again.

People were so tired and wet that they didn't have the strength to match their outraged feelings with actions. The navvy predicted that the people would avenge themselves, nevertheless:

"If it ain't better to-morrow, we'll break things up. There won't be any window panes in the Mayor's office! No more toastin' their toes for them."

Famine became imminent. Half the bakehouses were flooded and produced no bread. The bakers who could still carry on business were running short of flour.

"Come on, boys; move along," said the policemen; "all this yelling won't make the water go down! It's gone up twenty centimetres already this morning."

Charlet objected:

"It ain't true; you're only sayin' that to make us think you done right to put us out of our houses."

The dismal water crept resistlessly towards the older part of the quarter, where the inhabitants were not quite so poor. They were astonished to find themselves just as frightened as their less fortunate neighbours, and declared: "It's the end of the world!"

A freshly posted notice read: "The Seine will rise eighty centimetres during the next twenty-four hours."

M. Mécoeur no longer had the courage to be a rebel citizen. He discovered that he was only a poor man at the mercy of the eternal Forces. The relentless swelling of the river showed him that anything was possible in life,—he might even have to give up going to the Bank.

The old fear of the anger of God sprang up in the troubled minds of the women.

The water-line came nearer and nearer to the navvy, Charlet, and Ducq, and they drew back from it, silently.

At last they knew what resignation was.

AT THE EXPRESS WINDOW

The draymen pushed forward to turn in their way-bills:

"I'm first!"

"That ain't true!"

M. Lefèvre, whose job was to deliver the receipts, folded his hands, like a parson taking a nap, and watched the handfuls of yellow paper fly past, fanning his face:

"Keep yer line! Then you'll know who's first, and who's last. You guys is like a swarm o' flies on a lump o' sugar. Don't muss everything up like that!"

The men nearest the window grunted their replies, but others behind them put their complaints into words:

"Every time we has to wait longer!"

"I'll get me horses pinched, waitin' like this! And it won't be the first time either!"

"Why didn't you bring 'em in with you?" advised M. Lefèvre. He watched these noisy people, bristling with gestures, as calmly as he would have watched a beautiful sunset, then he spoke to them pleasantly:

"I'd like to see you boys in my job: 166 francs 66 centimes a month, to sit here and get sworn at, ten

hours a day. When you fellas gets fed up with yer job, you can take it out on yer horses. I ain't got no horse. D'ye get me? "

A drayman from one of the big stores, who was wearing a more elegant cap than the employees of the Company, refused to get him:

" Who gives a god damn about that? We'll buy you a drink, only get busy! "

M. Lefèvre felt the same way about it:

" No one wants to more than me, but how the hell can I do my job when yer throwin' the papers in my face? My nose don't need blowin'. Come on. Who's first? You don't know. Me either. Watch yer hands! " He let the window fall and laughed at the uproar.

His young assistant, bending over some writing in the corner of the office, timidly watched this man who was capable of such determination. M. Lefèvre skilfully rolled a cigarette, and held it out to him: " Lick it."

The young man ran his tongue along the paper, first to the right and then to the left. Then M. Lefèvre demonstrated his method, which was to hold his tongue still, and pass the paper along it with one movement.

" You slobber too much. But you got time to learn the makin' of cigarettes between now and twenty-one years of workin' like me. I was station master once,

but I got it in the neck, and here I am behind this window. Every time they lower my pitch, or whenever guys like those out there want to beat me up, first thing I do is light a cigarette. Want a light. . . . Don't mention it."

"What's that, rain?" He heard a fresh uproar outside.

The voice of one of the draymen provided the explanation: "The Company'll wipe it up. If I gets out o' line, I loses my turn."

M. Lefèvre pacified his assistant:

"Keep your shirt on; they ain't goin' to do it in here. I used to get angry too, but now it's always me for the easiest way. Sit down!"

He lifted the window: "Who's first? Oh, you're in line now. Good work! Way-bills, please. Acknowledged, are they? Thanks."

He put his cigarette down on a cross-section of track, which he had for a paper-weight, and began to write, while the file of men waited in silent fury:

"Next." A noise of terrific scuffling came from the other end of the line.

"Get back, for God's sake!"

"Ye don't pass me!"

"What is it, the horses?" asked M. Lefèvre.

A man was struggling to get to the window, but the draymen mastered him, and he now looked as though his one idea was to pick up his cap, which was in a

puddle on the floor, and get out of the place. But M. Lefèvre, curious to know who he was, asked:

"Explain yourself, please. Something to send off?"

The man put his hat on the ledge by the window, and began to speak at the top of his voice, but with great difficulty, for he was a foreigner:

"It is what a friend to me, he send off. He go with my furniture and much my money."

M. Lefèvre took up his cigarette again: "May I smoke?"

The man, oblivious of everything but what he had to say, exclaimed:

"Yes. . . . Yes. I must to stop him the friend to me!"

M. Lefèvre tried to silence the draymen:

"Keep quiet, can't you? . . . I ain't yellin', am I? He ain't takin' anybody's turn, he's only askin' a question." Then he answered the bewildered man:

"Nice friends you've got! It ain't the Police here, it's the Railroad. If you ain't got nothing to send off, then what the hell do I care for all that stuff yer talkin' about?"

The draymen roared: "Put 'im out!"

M. Lefèvre congratulated them:

"Ye'll get credit for this. . . . Fire 'im out. . . . A guy comin' in and mussin' everything up like that!"

There was complete disorder in the file, but the wrangling began all over again.

"My turn."

"That's a damn lie!"

"I'll get busy again when ye're in line, not before." And behind the ground-glass window, which was thick enough to withstand the hammerings of angry fists, M. Lefèvre spoke words of wisdom to his assistant:

"The Company shoves us from behind, and these fellas comes at us from the front. To hold down a job like this, you mustn't have any guts at all. Try to stand up to it, and you'll bust in two. Take it easy whatever happens. Those guys never get what we're drivin' at, but we got to keep on learnin' 'em what to do. What wouldn't I give to be sittin' with a new cap on my head, behind a nice window with lots of brass that was polished every mornin', and to open it just to say:" (he lifted the window) ". . .!"

"Eat it!" replied the man who was standing there.

AT THE CHEVALIER RESTAURANT

At the Chevalier Restaurant men with muddy feet called down the basement windows: "The box!" Two scullions, with dish-cloths around their necks, appeared, and lifted it according to their daily habit on to the wheel of the garbage wagon. The early risers of Paris walked briskly down the boulevard, for the crispness of October was in the air; they were hurrying to get to their jobs at seven o'clock. The valuable leavings from the restaurants were being carried up from the basements; skimmings and greasy water, worth five francs a barrel, were poured into metal containers on the wagon of the bone-dealer, whose horse was rubbing noses with the placid mare of the Little Sisters of the Poor. These nuns, in their black robes and hoods that swelled out as they went rapidly about their business, received crusts of bread, coffee grounds, and the little bits of meat left on the clients' plates. The proprietor's reputation for benevolence was further enhanced by a daily queue of hungry souls, amongst whom the waiters distributed scraps.

They waited quietly in the empty restaurant, with

its mirrors and white cloths laid for the next meal, the remains of which would be theirs. A woman, weary with carrying her baby, stood in the line, and her back was as round as a wet-nurse's bosom.

The two scullions started off to get their allowance of white wine, as cold as the morning itself, but they were stopped by two young men, who laid hands on their shoulders, and replied to the friendly good-mornings in a strong Auvergne accent:

"We're flat broke, and not a smell of a job!"

The two scullions got out drinks for the two jobless cooks. The humility of poverty caused these men to forget the difference between their callings, and the cooks were glad to discuss with the scullions the very absorbing question of where to get work. They complained of the great number of unemployed, and of the difficulty of getting placed after returning from summer jobs:

"There's a lot of misery in the winter in Paris."

"A steady job's a lot better than workin' by the season," declared one of the scullions.

Baugalois, called Steel-Shavings because of his curly hair, made some reservations:

"By the year, you don't have to worry, but the pay's bad. At Maire's the chefs get two hundred francs a month; the assistants, seventy to eighty. At Ledoyen's, the chefs three hundred; the assistants, ninety to a hundred. I'm just back from Trouville,

assistant sauce-maker, two hundred, laundry and fare paid."

Jandet held forth, with a Gascon accent:

"If you travel you learn yer job better. Ouvrard's sauce-makers, now, what can them guys turn out? Filets of sole with mussels and shrimps: the dish of the house. Got to keep movin' or you'll get stale."

The two scullions, who washed dishes, disapproved of these high-sounding arguments:

"Ye're always splittin' yer guts, if you work by the season. You don't get no rest at all."

Jandet put in sarcastically:

"And I s'pose there ain't no place like that in Paris?"

The oldest of the scullions informed them:

"There's two jobs goin' here. An entremets-cook and a larder-man near scratched each other's eyes out yesterday. I guess they've got the sack by this time."

Baugalois and Jandet finished their wine, and having thanked the scullion for this information, they set off on their round again. Their dragging steps betrayed the fact that they were out of work, and their faces, pale from constant proximity to the fire, distinguished them from other workmen who passed their days in cool work-rooms. The stream of busy people flowed past them.

A slow procession of fruit-carts filled the Marché

Saint-Honoré, as they entered the Benefit Society of their Association, where there was an employment office. The odour that clung to the clothes of these men, waiting near the door of the office, proclaimed their occupation; it was the same odour that rises from the basement windows of a restaurant. The summer season had just come to an end, and Paris, the great centre of employment, was full of these men.

The chance of a day's work as extra help, especially on Sunday when people generally dine at restaurants, enabled them to wait patiently near the office. The pay for a chef was ten francs, for an assistant, five, food included; and those who did not come in for these little windfalls got angry with the manager and accused him of favouritism, but never to his face, even though they had paid their Association fee of three francs regularly every month.

There are few revolutionary spirits amongst the members of these associations; permanent distress only occurs in the case of old men, who have been given the sack on account of their age. The young ones, devoted to their work and the earning of their living, have the ambition to be chefs one day, and they look forward to the possibility of a little income at the age of forty-five.

The minds of many are absorbed by the search for a nice place in a private house, where the work is easy

and brings them peace and quiet. Men who require more excitement stay in the restaurants, and feed their temperaments upon the noise and bustle which is impossible for a private servant. These men know what it is to be hungry.

Accents from every part of France can be detected in the speech of these wanderers, but the "*merde alors*" of the department of the Seine is heard most often. Men arrive from abroad, linguists now by virtue of "thank you" or "grazie." Weighed down by the future's uncertainty, they wait patiently, with their cold feet in shoes that cannot shine because they are covered with grease.

Most jobs were fixed up in the bars. Rather than trust to the manager of the Association, the chefs chose their own assistants. At the marble-topped tables, cards were played and white wine was drunk until ten o'clock, then *apéritifs* until noon, in order to keep in the good graces of the proprietor, who soon greeted M. Montchanin with a cordial hand-shake. M. Montchanin was chef at Chevalier's, at a salary of eight hundred francs a month, and he and the proprietor of the bar came from the same province. This latter gentleman, whose stomach had too long been the prey of "What'll you have?", was very anxious to please Baugalois and Jandet, who were sitting at a table near the door, lettered: WINES—LIQUEURS, for there were nineteen white wines, six

absinths, and eleven black currant cordials chalked up against them.

He advised M. Montchanin to engage them, to replace the two he had sacked with a week's pay the day before.

"Two good little fellas; quiet and never thirsty. White wine in the morning, *apéritif* at noon, then coffee and a few glasses of beer. Never get loaded."

M. Montchanin looked at their certificates, and said he would take them at ninety francs a month, Baugalois as entremets-cook, Jandet as larder-man. The proprietor wished them good luck at the chef's expense:

"What'll you have?"

From the cupboard they got their bundles, which looked like galantines: white jacket, slippers, and knives; and they started out briskly towards Chevalier's.

To other young men who came to drink white wine there, the proprietor offered encouragement:

"It'll be your turn soon."

Someone congratulated them on having missed the Chevalier job:

"Oh, that hole! Boiled beef every day, and not enough o' that to fill yer gut."

M. Montchanin had been decorated by the Agricultural Society for his interest in the yearly Culinary Exhibition. His weakness for honours of this sort had

now plunged him into the engrossing management of a Benefit Society. Other dignitaries of the Association got as far as the Legion of Honour, when they became rich and could get what they wanted.

Baugalois and Jandet went down into the kitchen of the Chevalier Restaurant. Men in white jackets were busy around the stoves and the heavy wooden tables, preparing for the midday meal. An assistant larder-man brought twelve chickens to the roaster, perspiring before his spit, then he showed the two new arrivals where to put their things: a tiny windowless room lit by electricity. The smell of cooking, confined in this place, was so strong that even those accustomed to it had difficulty in breathing.

Baugalois and Jandet put on their jackets and caps, grasped their knives, and moved silently across the sawdust-covered floor in slippered feet: Baugalois to his stove, and Jandet to the refrigerator room.

The head entremets-cook threw some beans into boiling water to bleach, shook hands with his new first assistant, and gave him a clean apron and two clean dish-cloths; these articles would be supplied to him every Thursday and Sunday.

Baugalois looked spotlessly clean beside the second assistant, whose apron was black with three days' use. While wiping off the table with a damp cloth, he explained to the newcomer how to lay the things out: where to put the spice-box, the string basket, and

at which corner of the stove to place the steamer for soups. Then he began to pull his leg:

"Know how to make an omlette in a salad-basket?"

Baugalois was afraid that his ability would not display itself immediately in this new place, and that he might hear that terrifying phrase:

"Is there anything you *can* do?"

The howler who received the orders from upstairs yelled:

"*Un maquereau à la Boni de Castellane!*"

The sauce-man answered for the first courses, and the roaster for the roasts, the grills, and the fries. The heaviest burden fell upon these men in the basements at meal hours, for it was then that the fires were hottest. The red surface of the stoves produced a terrific heat, and the stifled cooks poured with perspiration, but their agility was astonishing. Little dry clouds of sawdust followed their rapid footsteps. Each one kept his temper until someone bumped into him, and then the oaths broke forth with force and promptness.

The howler yelled to the entremets-cook: "Mush for the dog!"

"Oh, hell; I forgot the brute!" was the angry response.

The second assistant darted after a brass casserole, and plunked it down on the stove; into it he put the soft part of a loaf of bread and some consommé, and

then, with a swift movement, forked out the bread and brought the consommé to a boil.

The head entremets-cook, rapidly buttering some vegetables, explained to Baugalois:

"Every day at noon: a panada with consommé and chopped meat. The brute belongs to a harlot. First-class references!"

He shouted to the larder-man:

"Meat for the dog!" And Jandet emerged briskly from the cool room, where one's cheeks stayed pink.

The howler grumbled:

"Go get your mush, *my pet!*" Then he told Baugalois:

"Here's a customer to look after. A hundred sous a day for a dog! No bones and chopped very fine! No grease!"

Baugalois accomplished this little job easily, but he whispered his indignation to the second assistant:

"It's a damn shame! I've been starving for two months; there's been plenty o' days when I didn't eat nothin'. A hundred sous for a brute of a dog, and I know lots o' guys who ain't got fifteen."

The second assistant agreed heartily:

"We gets boiled beef, and that brute laps up the broth."

Clearing his throat with a cough, he spat copiously into the casserole:

"Eat that. There ain't no bones in it!"

Baugalois lessened his indignation by contributing in a similarly outrageous manner to the nourishment of the pampered animal. Thus their injured sense of justice was avenged.

FAT-MONTH

The oven-man at Nicollet's confectionery shop had been taken on at fifty francs a month in spite of the fact that he was only twenty-six. The apprentices called him Fat-Month. He was a good worker, and caught on to his job very quickly; then he made a totally different arrangement of the utensils in the bakehouse, according to his own ideas: the baking tins near the door, in order to save the steps of those who came to get them. The flour-man, who had been with Nicollet for fifteen years, protested against all these changes:

"This is what ye might call a revolution! Everything was all right before that devil came!" And he left the pie-dishes in a heap near their old place. Fat-Month picked them up, and piled them, between some puff-paste ready for rolling out and a lump of brioche dough, on the marble rolling slab. Then he went back to the bakehouse and complained to Henri, his apprentice, whom they called Joseph because there were already two Henris in the establishment:

"A good workman always tidies up after his work; it's easy to spot the messy ones. They're always forgettin' somethin'; it's like not bein' house-broke!"

"Not much grub here, is there, old man?"

"Be quick, Midget, loosen these and jump them out." He was the smallest of all the apprentices, hence this nickname.

Fat-Month drew a pan of plum cakes out of a slow oven, and the black handle of the oven-shovel missed the opposite wall of the narrow room. Through the one little window, one could see the legs of the people on the pavement, and often the same legs stopped for a long time in front of the shop window; these people would always have the glass between them and the good things like that. Then there were the street children, whose heads could be seen; the smell of cooking pastry made their mouths water, and their dirty little hands tightened on the gratings. When there were too many of them, the men in the bakehouse had no light, and it was the custom to soak them with the water-sprinkler, but Fat-Month did away with this procedure. He warned Joseph:

"If anyone beats you up, Colossus, when I'm not there, give me a call. There's no one but me has the right to do that, and I ain't never done it yet, have I, Little Empty Gut? But if you slop water in the faces of those brats, I'll kick yer tail."

M. Nicollet, a stocky little man in a white jacket with pearl buttons, shouted on the way down the stairs:

"Things goin' all right?"

Fat-Month unfolded two arms of the gas light to let his boss see the pastry being taken out of the quick oven to be put back into a slow one to develop properly. Contentment was visible upon M. Nicollet's round face, but he spoke with the oven-man as though matters of the most serious nature were under discussion.

Fat-Month was never the man to talk about his old jobs. His past was as much of a secret as those of the other men were common knowledge. With them it was always:

"When I was with Barbauneux in the Place du Havre . . .", or else: "Don't tell me anything about candy flowers; I used to make 'em at old Pointu's."

The flour-man scraped the dough from his fingers, and addressed M. Nicollet:

"Ye're not going to keep that lump o' flesh, are you? Where's he come from? He's always frowning. I likes to work along with guys when I knows what's in their heads. He ain't paid his way in here; we never yet had a drink together! I don't mind tellin' where I was before comin' here! . . ."

"He holds down his job to suit me," said M. Nicollet; he wanted to keep this man, who worked hard for small wages.

Joseph, thinking to imitate the manner of Fat-Month, started to plague the flour-man's apprentice,

one of the other Henris, who was called Chocolate because of his dark skin. Once Chocolate came staggering by with a load of cold baking tins, and shouted, "Hot!" in order to clear the way. Joseph loitered in front of him, but Fat-Month pulled him roughly aside:

"Don't you know you've got to make room for people carrying things?"

At the dead season there were only small bakings for the shop, and big orders for private houses were rare. When there was no baking to be done, Fat-Month and Joseph polished the steel fishes on the oven doors with emery paper. Then they burnt up the cockroaches that swarmed behind the pie-dishes. It was a bad year for these, and they often fell into the dough before baking, leaving their almond-shaped imprints upon the cakes when they came out of the oven. Fat-Month asked M. Nicollet to give him some redding for the bricks, but the answer was: "We'll see about that next year." M. Nicollet was making his fortune, sou by sou.

Fat-Month took out his baking, done to a nicety, then re-brushed the rolls of the day before with the yolk of an egg, and put them in the oven for a moment to give them a crackle. This finished, he sat down to read a pamphlet, but the next moment M. Nicollet, having been promptly notified, appeared on the stairs again:

"Well, what about your work?"

"I ain't got nothing to do but redden the bricks!"

M. Nicollet's red face, beneath his white cap, betrayed his anger; he was master of his well-lit store and his dingy basement. He was breathing fast, as though he had been running, but he kept his temper:

"Buy the redding instead of wasting your sous on books. It'll keep your hand in."

When there was nothing in the oven, Fat-Month continued his laborious reading. Sometimes it took him a whole day to read a page, for his attention often strayed, and he stared straight in front of him with compressed lips, as motionless as an image.

The flour-man was standing in the corner by the sink, where a man got fifty francs a month for scrubbing the utensils, after washing them in foul-smelling water. He darted an unfinished sneer at Fat-Month, which left his mouth open in his flour-covered face, then he burst out:

"Did you ever know the beat o' that? A guy readin' in workin' hours! A fine example for the apprentices! I don't drink in workin' hours, now, do I? Drinkin' don't hinder you like readin', either. And you're much fresher fer yer work if you go to a house of nights, than if you go to one of them lecture courses."

He never read anything, not even the papers. But he was often drunk, and boasted of the number of

drinks he could hold, as well as of his collection of venereal diseases. He came to his work restless and loud-mouthed about his ability:

"Look how much I turned out to-day, and it's all good stuff too. I never hit the sheets at all last night, and poured thirty drinks into my gut." He went behind the ice-box for a moment. "That's my seventh for to-day and I ought to get a tobacco-shop from the Government."

Fat-Month called to him from the oven:

"Yer rum-cakes is leakin'," for the moulds were overflowing.

The flour-man retaliated:

"It's you done that. You raised 'em too quick."

Fat-Month was angry:

"Come cook 'em yerself, bone-head. You'd do yer work better if you weren't such a tank."

The flour-man came back at him:

"It's you's the bone-head. And readin's what's done it. You ain't got the guts to take a drink."

At that moment M. Nicollet arrived upon the scene:

"Get to yer work, will you! And don't let me hear any more rumpus."

"All right," said Fat-Month, "only you've got to tell him it's his fault. Look what a mess that is."

M. Nicollet didn't want to take sides with a new man against an old one:

"Don't tell me what to do. I'm boss around here!"

Fat-Month took off his apron:

"You won't do it? . . . All right, I'm leaving."

Seeing that he had no chance of keeping this valuable though stubborn man, the boss let him have it:

"So this is what I get for my trouble, old sour-face! And after I was willing to take you without a certificate! . . . You went after your other employer with a shovel. . . . And you know what we agreed. . . . No fighting, or else . . . You can't expect a reference. . . ."

"I never fight," said Fat-Month. "I'm not getting fair play, and I'm going when I've done me work. I'll finish what I got started in the oven, and leave everything tidy."

The flour-man beat a march with his rolling-pin on the marble slab, while Fat-Month rolled up his things without tying them up, so that he could show M. Nicollet that he hadn't taken anything. At the foot of the dusty stairway, he shook hands with Joseph, who had put on a clean jacket. It was the smallest one in the place, but the sleeves had to be turned up because they covered his hands.

"Good-bye, Colossus. And there's two things you must always care about: Justice and yer work."

THE FLY-CATCHER

Jules Ghys's family used to say:

"He's not ill, he's only drunk."

This was why, at the age of fifty, he became an inmate of the Home for Incurables, and appeared to spend his days in catching flies. Not that he could ever have actually caught one, but, owing to a nervous twitching motion,—produced by the six thousand litres of gin he had consumed, a pint a day,—one got the impression that this was his occupation, and they called him the Fly-Catcher. He hardly ever left the Home, for the manager wouldn't allow him to go out alone, and his people, who were beet-distillers at Pont-à-Marcq, refused to have visits from him there. They had their reputation to think of.

His joy was unbounded when he discovered, one day, that all the old men and incurables had to go to the municipal elections, to vote for the retiring Council. He had to be dosed with bromide, in order to forestall his twitch No. 2. This was to beat one of his buttocks with his clenched fist, and if, by mistake, he attacked himself in front, the beating occurred somewhere beneath his navel. This seeming obscenity afforded great amusement to his grinning audience of urchins and old men.

M. Tison, besides being Mayor, was a prosperous restaurant owner, and his 122 bars had supplied many patients to the Home he had endowed in order to obtain a decoration. To-day he had come to speak to these old men, broken down by work or alcohol. Their intense stupidity gave them an appearance of rapt attention, as they sat with hands on their canes, and their rounded backs stretching their blue uniforms out of shape. The attendants kept the Fly-Catcher at the back of the hall, with the others who had embarrassing peculiarities.

After this ceremony, the ones who still had the power of speech, drew aside those who could only slobber, and complained bitterly against the food they were given to eat:

"We ga' t' eat raw herr'n. Th' blood goes *tchik* when yo' bite 'em."

They were given two ballots, not blank ones, but bearing M. Tison's name, one in each pocket, to relieve them of the trouble of searching.

M. Hanel was in great favour with the retiring Council, and, consequently, the possessor of a decoration, in spite of the fact that, owing to his engrossing occupation of selling beer and gin, he had almost forgotten how to write. The Fly-Catcher, and his freakish companions, were placed in charge of M. Hanel and four members of M. Tison's committee, for they needed steering in the crowd of other old

men, also well primed, but who were allowed to vote without help.

Gay-coloured posters in the rue de Lille set forth the usual political qualifications of the candidates. M. Tison's men were quick to cover the Opposition's declarations with a lengthy discourse, that began as follows:

" That wretched M. Chapelier, whose head must be full of dough rather than brains, and who cannot keep a servant in his house, has the effrontery to believe that he can conduct the government of the commune. . . ."

M. Chapelier's committee utilized the posters which had been drawn up by M. Tison's followers four years before, and they argued that, since these pronouncements had won the election for the Opposition then, they might win it for M. Chapelier this time. The name on the red placard was all that had to be changed:

" That worthless individual, M. Chapelier . . ."

And M. Tison was now accused, as he had accused his opponent, of never discharging his debts, of sleeping with his housemaids, of using consecrated wafers to affix advertisements of copaiva balsam in lavatories.

Attention was also called to M. Tison's declarations, followed, in each instance, by this simple remark: " What rubbish! " The quotations were printed

in the smallest type the printer could produce, and the replies in the largest:

"M. Tison accuses us of having stopped the procession of the Assumption, and of having ill-treated the tradespeople;

WHAT RUBBISH!

M. Tison accuses us of having baptized our children, and of unfaithfulness to our convictions;

WHAT RUBBISH!"

In a special address to the old men and the incurables, M. Hanel said: "It's all a big joke, because they've put this in, and it's true; that the promise,—given before the last elections,—to increase the pensions of people like you has not been kept."

The old men stopped listening to the haranguing of M. Hanel, so he shoved them gently towards the door, with those hands that were so quick at pushing mugs across a bar.

"We must hurry and vote, if you want to have time for a drink afterwards."

The Fly-Catcher was able, during this commotion, to shake his arms about as much as he liked, and his legs too, so that he was soon far from his caretakers. To go after him was out of the question, because the others wanted to follow his example at once, and they needed the attention of all the escorts. So the Fly-Catcher was abandoned, in order that the others might not escape.

In front of the Town Hall, M. Marcilliau, one of

M. Chapelier's committee, had the little band of incurables circularized by his distributers, and M. Hanel's men had great difficulty in getting these papers away from the old men, who all wanted to have what their companions had.

When at last they were filing up the Town Hall stairs, M. Hanel prepared them for their electoral duty by carefully examining their ballots, and seeing that they did not eat them or use them to polish the hand-rail. When he was satisfied that they all had the right ones, he thanked them after this fashion:

"All right, clear out! Off with you!" But his troubles were not yet ended. The appearance of the Fly-Catcher in the ranks of the Opposition, under the wings of M. Marcilliau and another of M. Chapelier's followers, produced a fresh excitement, and M. Hanel was unable to rectify such a flagrant departure from the accepted rules of voting, for people were yelling:

"Stop pushing, please; these gentlemen know how they want to vote!"

This was evidently the Fly-Catcher's opinion too, for he stuck close to M. Marcilliau, who had strengthened his arguments with a big lump of chewing tobacco. The new recruit had his mouth full of it, and the juice running from his lips mingled its foul odour with the reek of gin.

M. Hanel whispered something to M. Desroussaux-Seynaëve, one of the Mayor's deputies, who had

charge of the ballot-box; he was seated beneath the plaster bust of the Republic, which looked very white in front of a festoon of eight new tricolour flags worth 95 centimes each. He understood at once, and being able to tell by the feel of a ballot what name it bore, he made all the adverse ones worthless with an inky finger. When the Fly-Catcher came up with his ballot, the deputy could not get it out of his fluttering grasp without showing his own dipped finger, and they looked as though they were both after the same fly. The Chapelier committee, who were used to all such methods, kept a closer watch than ever, and Jules Ghys put his valid ballot through the slit in the pine box with his own hand.

The Fly-Catcher's pleasures were now over. M. Marcilliau had had enough of him, and a push was all the thanks he got from that quarter. M. Hanel appeased his anger by digging him savagely in the ribs, and this continued until he got out into the street. There he followed a gang of youthful enthusiasts who passed by singing the Marseillaise. The last verse died out, by arrangement, in a cabaret where the Fly-Catcher had the right to free drinks at the expense of the Tison committee. But his opinions were impossible to stabilize, for he was seen later on with another gang whose slogan was: "To hell with priests!"

These simple words seemed to delight him, and,

after being sick on the floor of the anti-clerical cabaret, —for which performance he was ejected into the street by a perspiring waiter,—he went off, repeating them over and over again, with no regard whatever for the politics of his listeners. He barely escaped having to undergo bitter punishment for his sectarianism, at the hands of another group, whose throats were busy with the praises of Jeanne d'Arc, but he changed his tune, and could therefore enter their cabaret.

Better news of the election's progress calmed M. Hanel's anger, and he said:

"Pretty close thing, what!"

M. Marcilliau agreed with him, which proved that they had both used, with equal daring, every available weapon. Each had done his utmost, in the way of inventing slander and insult, and intoxicating the electors.

M. Hanel was worried by the thought of being unable to take the Fly-Catcher back to the Home with the other old men. He knew very well that the gin from M. Tison's 122 bars would have its result, and fully realized the harm that would be done, should the Opposition discover one of them having an attack of the D.T.'s or epilepsy in the street.

The task of finding the Fly-Catcher was entrusted to M. Descattoires, who was still sober, in spite of the enormous quantity of liquor he had been obliged to consume while engaged in collecting voters. He

prepared for a long hunt, and went off muttering the reward he would exact for his trouble:

"Between here and the Home, me old boy, I'll land ye a hundred good roots in the tail."

The Fly-Catcher's political contradictions made the realization of this ambition a doubtful matter. It wasn't worth while going the rounds of all the clerical cabarets, only to find the old fellow singing Red Revolution in the camp of the Opposition, so Descattoires endured their sour glances,—happily not unaccompanied by drinks,—and acquired this information:

"That ole devil out o' th' Home? He's off wid a lot o' them clerical guys. Guess he's to vespers by this time."

None of the sleeping men in the quiet church proved to be the Fly-Catcher, and Descattoires poked his cane into the confessionals, and made a useless trip around by the candle-laden altar. Then he began conscientiously to visit all the bars again. At ten o'clock he no longer knew his own politics. Some people swear they saw him with a gang who were shouting:

"Vive Chapelier!"

and

"Tison, c'est un cochon
La digue digue don . . ."

The Fly-Catcher hasn't been found yet, and it's a pity, for there is to be a second ballot. He's got to vote again.

A RICH CITY

(1903)

Armentières has only recently become a rich city; Roubaix and Turcoing are passing through a similar period of industrial prosperity, and the wooden army huts outside the old walls of Lille are now used as dwellings by its rapidly increasing population. In the old days, and up to just before the War of 1870, Armentières had for its motto: "Poor and Proud." Twenty years ago one word of it was changed: "Rich and Proud."

The textile industry brought this about in one generation. Weavers with small capital established themselves as big manufacturers, by marrying into the rich industrial families of Lille. There was money-making in the air, and capital was plentiful, but this prosperity did not extend outside the employer class; the working-people reaped none of its benefits. Their numbers increased, in order to supply more labour, but wages remained miserably inadequate,—an essential factor in the process of fortune-making. A few very rich people, and a multitude of poor ones! That was what made a town prosperous and productive! All over France people talked about "The Wealth of Armentières."

The little business men who had become big manufacturers were all suffering from the affliction common among the new-rich: the fear of starving. They were terrified by the thought of losing the flesh they had so lately taken on, and their monopoly of the profits brought misery to their unfortunate dependents.

Luxury became a necessity among these new-rich; if a man was worth more than his neighbour, he wished the fact to be known, and he didn't mind paying to prove it. The misery of the workers increased proportionately, and neither their indignation, nor their strikes, nor the tariff of 1889, could check this mad desire for gain on the part of the manufacturers, or their determination to give the worker the least possible share in it: the price of his slice of bread with no meat on it, and his pint of beer.

The families of the manufacturers were as large as those of the workers, and more money was needed to establish these children in business. The worker's wrath becomes all the more violent when he has watched a pile being made in one generation. Perhaps his father had known a manufacturer, or one whose son was now a manufacturer, when he only had a little spinning-mill and a small piece of land, or even when he was still an overseer. They had been friends in those days, and then came the rich marriage and the prosperity; the succeeding years brought wretched poverty to one and great riches to the other,

and to-day they pass each other without speaking. The workman's son watches the manufacturer's wealth growing each day, and he sees his own existence following the same miserable course as that of his father.

The jealousy of this multitude of workmen who have remained poor makes Armentières a furnace of hatred, and strikes become bitter contests; old, deep-rooted passions flame up into deeds that lead to riots and plundering.

We have just seen this happen.

The rich man holds himself aloof from everything. He helps nobody and patronizes none of the shops. All his clothes, his shoes, and his furniture come from Lille or Paris. At Armentières, no shop-keeper could exist by catering to the rich, and there are only little shops for the poor. Building firms are the only local ones patronized by the rich man. His factory, close to the station, and his home on the other side of the Lys, provide his rivals with solid, visual proofs of his financial standing. He places a dome upon his factory, which can be seen from a great distance; it serves no other purpose. Then his business competitor and financial rival puts a more elaborate one on his, that can be seen from a greater distance. This rivalry grows into a hatred which is equalled only by the workmen's hatred of *them*. Once a house was acquired by one of these gentlemen on Belgian territory, and one of his rivals immediately bought up the

surrounding property, in order to spread upon it every possible kind of rubbish and filth from his factory and his country house. Two families might have been fed from this land thus used for no better purpose than to enrage a rich man's rival.

The architecture of the aristocratic portions of the city, where the manufacturers live, is expensively ornate, owing to a feverish inter-city rivalry. In that quarter, one sees fat, overfed servants, and their masters who appear to be almost as well nourished: luxurious beings, oozing greed and abundance from every pore. And if you want to see the poor trash upon whom they live, you need only cross the Lys. From the Grande Place to the far end of Houplines, there are rows of workmen's dwellings, black and monotonous, with tiny doors, and windows with little white curtains. Every now and then, the high walls of a factory rise up abruptly, and then again the eye follows the low line of mean hovels on either side of the street. Here and there the two lines are cut by short passages, through which can be seen the fields behind: that great northern plain with its windmills, each making the sign of the Cross.

As a supplement to their wretched wages, these people sometimes dabble in fraudulent trade: the introduction of Belgian goods received from professional smugglers. Besides the men who have horses and bring in full carts of tobacco, there are great numbers

of Flemish, Belgian, and French youths who support themselves by means of this illicit trading, for it is a calling that requires nimble feet. Related to the weavers, living and trading with them, these youths also hate the rich manufacturers, and they have another quality common to persecuted men: audacity.

They, and the weavers' sons, took prominent places in the front ranks of the mob that had just converted the strike into a riot; the former did not lack the courage to strike the first blow, and the other youngsters, who were quite angry enough, but needed someone to set the example, broke things up with just as much spirit, when they had conquered their timidity. They destroyed the property that had been acquired by the rich men with their help and under their very eyes; they broke the windows without shutters as they passed, and stopped to tear down shutters when they found them. When a house was entered, nothing remained intact. According to the custom of the North, where it is unnecessary to shield oneself from the sun, only the ground floor windows are shuttered, and this for safety at night. All the others present their unguarded panes to the street, irrespective of the weather.

The rich men's houses have plate-glass in their windows, affording a sight of curtain-fringes, crystal chandeliers, ferns, and bronze statues. The lace at the windows looks as fine and white as gimp in a show-

case. Look out! A volley of big stones smashes through it. Downstairs the shutters are cracking; angry shouts come up from the front door, crashing inwards. In the invaded drawing-room, a boy of eighteen is beating time against a tall mirror with two bronze candlesticks, while the jagged pieces fall down among the ornaments on the black marble mantel.

Hatred flames up, and has its full revenge. Two poor railwaymen, roughly discharged by a richly married inspector, have brought a mob to ransack his luxurious house. Outside in the street, the crowds, who hadn't the courage to join in the plundering, are filled with excitement by the noise within, and they scream their approval, as they push towards the broken door. It is irritating not to have broken any of those hated possessions; and they would have gone on until they had destroyed all the houses of the rich, had it not been for the sudden gleam of an officer's nickelled breastplate. The men behind him, with their unpolished ones, fill the street, and the horses switch the walls of the houses with their tails.

The sight of drawn swords sends the crowds scuttling homewards; there is a frantic clattering of heavy shoes through tiny back gardens, and excited discussions are carried on behind the little white curtains.

They run before soldiers, but they bear them no

ill-will. If there is one standing on guard at a blocked street, or on duty at a factory entrance, they talk with him; prostitutes laugh with him or pity him. The men ask, "When's your time up?" And if a faint-hearted one doesn't know how to clear a pavement, lacking the courage to bring the butt-end of his gun upon the encroaching feet, they will obey him, to prevent his getting punished by the watchful officer. They have been soldiers themselves.

With an officer it is a different matter; towards him they are sarcastic and insulting, out of revenge for the treatment they received when in service. His gold braid is too shiny, and hurts their eyes, so they throw mud at it. Braid is all very well at a pageant, but they loathe the sight of it when there is a strike on. Then it is a menace.

The most hated of all is the policeman; he is more ruthless than the others, and the cleverest of all at persecution. He knows his way about, and is acquainted with everybody. He notices the smugglers who are taking part in the rioting, for he's been on their track before, and knows them both by appearance and by name. He has his fingers in everything, and there are innumerable old scores against him to be settled. The rioters would like to string up a policeman, and one of those elegant officers who look like disguised women, and naturally a manufacturer.

. . . . . .

One Sunday, two weeks later, I came out of the Armentières station into silent streets. I had been accustomed to hearing the pounding of horses' hoofs and the clatter of fleeing workmen's shoes, and the unexpected stillness pleased me.

Presently I was accosted by several little girls in the most pitiful rags, who had been leaning against a wall. One of them asked eagerly for money. Her hair was pulled tightly to the back of her head, and tied with an old piece of red ribbon that had become a mere cord, making her bared ears look enormous.

"Please, Mister, there's six of us at home, and we ain't got enough to eat."

The others hadn't their hair combed at all, and moaned unintelligibly. I walked off rapidly, for I had next to nothing to live on myself, but the little girl, with her hair pulled back, ran along at my side, repeating:

"Mister, we ain't got enough to eat!"

If she had been lying she would have said, 'We ain't got nothing to eat.'

Professional beggars lie in the superlative, and people who tell the truth speak a language that the others never use. This little girl described the actual state of affairs: "Not enough to eat." After her meals she was still hungry. I gave her two sous and hurried off. Her angry companions cast envious glances in her direction, and she moved a little away from them.

Then they turned to me again, and, pushing the hair away from their swimming eyes, whined:

"Me too, Mister. Me too, Mister."

They pressed up close to me, all except the tiniest one, who was apparently a cripple; she seemed unable to follow them, in spite of her heroic attempts to do so, and the one with my two sous showed them to her, saying:

"That makes six already!"

When the others saw her cross the street towards a man who looked more prosperous than I did, they abandoned me in order to get to him first.

From time to time women passed arm in arm down the silent street, in badly fitting clothes of some plain, heavy material. Here, in the rich quarter, where the rioting had taken place, many shutters and doors were pieced with new white wood, making them look as though they had been bandaged, and the frosted glass transom above one freshly varnished door had been temporarily repaired with a piece of ordinary window-glass. These violated houses, now repaired and closed to the street, had their silken blinds drawn down, like closed eyelids.

A young girl, followed by a youth, came out of a gate with bronze latches; both of them were luxuriously attired, healthy, and vigorous. A tall, shiny collar seemed to push the young man's thick lips and fat chin into prominence; his slender companion was

exquisite in her new frock, which exhaled an expensive perfume. Once in the street, she said to him, "Quickly!" and hurried off on the sharp toes of her new shiny shoes, that crackled as she ran.

Two policemen stood inoffensively in the square, where I had once seen bristling swords and shining breastplates; they were anxiously awaiting the moment when they could knock off and go and have a drink. I walked past the Town Hall, and on into the poor districts, where the broken iron covers of the man-holes were still unreplaced. In this way traps had been laid for horses charging down the streets. Volleys of stones had made a clean sweep of the factory windows, and there were jagged holes in all except one, high up under the roof.

On Sundays, and naturally during a strike, the fires are extinguished and no smoke rises from the chimney. Since there is thick mud everywhere, owing to the wet weather and badly made pavements, boys who have their best clothes on can only gaze longingly at the big stones in the street. The long rows of low dwellings, darkened by frequent high factory-walls, have a hostile aspect, and it requires courage to open one of those doors, set in endless black walls that rise out of the thick mud. Within, there is dreariness and gloom, until the eye is relieved by the sight of the first window. A square of bright light comes through the little muslin curtains of all these smoke-blackened

hovels. The front door, though only as big as the door of a cupboard, is kept shut, and the sill whitened. How do people live in places like this? One can walk the whole length of that filthy street without hearing a sound behind those curtains.

I discovered Vandermer's restaurant, where I had taken refuge one day during the rioting, and had stood by the door with the others who were scoffing at the cuirassiers. Mme. Vandermer warned us that they would hit us with their foraging ropes, so we withdrew into the restaurant. Through the window, we could see some street urchins pick up big stones, and throw them at the approaching horsemen. When they were about twenty yards off, the urchins retreated rapidly into a narrow alley.

The shining breastplate of an officer now appeared, and the restaurant curtains, which had been drawn back, fell into their places. The cuirassiers had approached slowly during the shower of stones, and they now stretched across the street from wall to wall. The horse on the pavement nearest to us clouded the restaurant window with its breath, and its tail, swishing against the glass, sounded like pattering rain.

The moment they had passed, we opened the door, and saw the long line of shaking manes and unpolished breastplates. Then the army of urchins emerged from the alley, and began picking up fresh ammunition.

This Sunday when I entered the restaurant, Mme. Vandermer recognized me:

"No soldiers to-day!" She had to say something to me, while pouring out my beer.

Her other customers were seated around shiny tables, smoking Belgian tobacco in long clay pipes. One serious old fellow, whose face was like a stone image, spoke slowly, lifting the lid of his pewter mug:

"A fine business! All th' same, they done too much breakin' up!"

A young man, with his cap pulled down over his eyes, objected:

"If we hadn't broke nothin', we'd 'a' got nothin' fer all our trouble!"

Both men spat on the sanded floor, and pulled again at their long white pipes. The smoke rose up from each table, like steam from a huge soup-kettle, and the room was blue with it.

"Everybody's owin' money these days," put in Mme. Vandermer, "and there's hundreds and hundreds out o' work!"

I paid for my beer, and the door, closing behind me, expelled a puff of blue smoke into the street. As I walked down the long muddy thoroughfare that leads through Houplines, my steps made a noise like grease on gear wheels. At the end of each narrow passage between the houses, I could see the open country, where the wind blew ceaselessly against the black

poplars, bending them so continuously that their efforts to straighten up again were invisible. One would have declared they had grown at that angle. After each little clear spot came long stretches of blackened brick, dotted with white curtains.

I passed some men bound for a cock-fight, with their birds in bags under their arms. Far down the street I could hear the hooting of the tramway horn, and this short, dismal sound fell clearly on my ears, for there was no echo in that flat country. How exasperating those curtains were! Not even one corner lifted up. Behind them, absolute silence. They gave one the same feeling of uneasiness as do the stubbornly closed eyes of people who are suffering. And were they inside there, those hundreds and hundreds of people without work, and the families of those little girls who had asked me for money at the station?

Still another of those little narrow passages, opening on to a vast brown field, swimming in mist and drenched by rain. Then the rows of lifeless doors and windows again. Oh, the poverty behind those white curtains! And the cock-fighters still walked past: ignorant, boastful men chattering about the birds they were taking to be killed. I turned into an alley leading to a little courtyard surrounded by houses that looked even smaller than the others. It was like being in a hole, but I also experienced the pleasant sensation

of having found a refuge; the intimate atmosphere of these secretive little dwellings seemed to come out through their walls, and pervade the deserted courtyard. The grey sky was so low that it seemed to touch the roofs, and this was what gave me the sensation of standing at the bottom of a pit. The wind blowing above them seemed to have spent its force in the great surrounding plain.

A tiny plaintive sound was coming from one of the houses, and I pretended to take a drink at the straw-covered pump, in order to conceal the fact that I was listening. There, behind one of those curtains, someone was playing an accordion very gently, meekly, secretly. It was easy to guess that the person playing it like this had a shy disposition, and that he went through life without ever being at his ease; readily discouraged, and trying to take up as little room as he possibly could. It was like a disinherited child,—proud and sensitive,—sobbing where no one could hear. . . . I longed to see his face. Was he old? Was he young? I shall never know.

It was a refined little complaint, behind a very white curtain in a tiny black house, with the wind of the plains roaring above. And I shall never forget it.

"MILLER, YOU'RE ASLEEP"

"*Miller, you're asleep,*" said the inquisitive visitor to the man who sat on a pile of bags, with his back against a board partition. He had been asleep, in spite of the vibration caused by the turning sails, but now he slowly lifted his eyelids, and his grey eyes shone forth from his flour-covered face. The inquisitive man asked:

"Isn't the mill running too fast? Surely this gale is too much for it?"

The man who had been awakened stretched out his arms until one had the impression of a crucifixion:

"If you were a miller, you wouldn't be afraid of wind hurting a windmill. For eight days there's only been a little soft breeze, low down on the ground, but yesterday morning it began to come fresh and sharp out of the north. Last night the sails were moving; they could feel the wind. Now it's dropped down again."

His questioner was amazed:

"You work at night?"

"All night. And sometimes after a full day of it, too. When the wind blows, there's work to be done; that's how it is with me. When the wind drops, the

mill's idle, but it's always ready to do its part. If I had to go to bed to sleep, I couldn't tend a windmill. A good miller makes use of every breath that blows, for no man can get back the wind when it's died down."

The visitor continued:

"When I first saw the little mill from over yonder, I said to myself: What a pleasant occupation that would be; the miller there must be a happy man. And now I find you sometimes don't get your sleep. When the miller sleeps, it means he's at the end of his strength."

"It worries me to have the mill idle. And as for rest, I get plenty of it when there's no wind. Then I've got the canvas to mend. There's always something to do. If you're working in a steam mill, you have regular hours; every day is the same, and the machinery starts and stops whenever you want. But the old windmills produce better flour."

The inquisitive man saw 1772 carved on the huge oak trunk that served as a pivot for this revolving structure, and he examined the old mechanism of wooden beams and rope transmissions. There was no iron anywhere; nothing but fine old carpentry work, with tenoned and mortised oak.

"You couldn't get one built like it to-day," said the miller. "That oak pivot has a hundred and twenty-nine circles: a hundred and twenty-nine years!

You'd never be able to hug that the way you hug your wife, and she'll never be as old as that. Folks don't want to live that long. This mill's a lucky one, too. Never a fire, from the day it started going; sails have been carried away in heavy storms, but the mill's never been blown over since the day it was built."

His listener was lost in meditation. Through a hundred and twenty-nine springs and summers this trunk had borne green foliage and had sheltered nesting birds.

The miller went up the ladder to pour some wheat into the funnel above the furrowed grinder, which the revolving sails turned upon the nether stone. He took up a handful, and let it fall back through his fingers into the funnel.

"This belongs to the farmer ploughing over there," he said; "it's beautiful wheat." And he pointed through a little window, about the size of his face, to a man guiding his black horse over the light brown earth, where the wheat had ripened almost in the shadow of the windmill's sails.

The fields were flooded with the pale green of early spring, and the branches of the trees were still visible behind tiny leaves as soft as down. "If they would only stay like that and not grow any more," thought the enraptured man, and his eyes devoured the young green, the loveliest green of all the year. Then he pointed to a rigid poplar, bristling with little branches.

"It is said that no man can count the stars. Can the branches of a tree be counted?"

The miller took hold of the rope beside the ladder, and said good-night, inclining his flour-covered head:

"I've run this mill for forty years; they planted the poplars along the road after I came, and look at them now, higher than these sails."

"Forty years of it! You've been able to put by something!"

"I've got a little piece of land. To-day I get forty-five francs a month, and food and lodging as well. At one time it was only twenty; there used to be mills scattered over the fields all the way to Lille, but now only two oil-mills are left, and I am the only one for flour,—not as white as you get from the steam mills, but honest flour. At the steam mills they do a lot of mixing. Here, there's the grain from one field only in the bags."

The questioner continued, pointing to the man in the fields:

"Does he make his living?"

"Yes, there are three like him in the village, with ovens in their houses. The others give their flour to the baker to make up. People like baker's bread nowadays, and there's money made in that trade. My employer charges thirty sous to grind a hectolitre. He's a carter, too; he takes in the wheat, and sends back the flour, and he doesn't do badly when the wind

is blowing,—twenty-one hectolitres a day. He won't make much more to-day; the wind's getting lazy."

The sail shaft, which was geared on to the grindstone-pivot with oak pegs, revolved more slowly, causing the ladder to quiver slightly, and the miller said good-night again to his visitor, who descended cautiously. The old man's powdery clothes gave him the same colour as the wood, and his eyes gleamed brightly through a dull mask of dust.

The inquisitive man walked for some distance along the grey road, and then turned back to look across the green fields at the mill,—the earth's faithful companion, for whose grindstone a hundred and fifty harvests had ripened under the sun. The sails were barely moving in the waning breeze, and they made the slow, agonized gestures of a dying man.

Before very long, he thought, the last sail will turn its last turn. To-day, men let the wind blow past them, and this old industry will soon disappear.

A red chimney rose up into the motionless twilight behind him; it seemed to be still glowing with the heat of the vanished sun,—a chimney so high and thin, that its sootless smoke issued forth, imperceptibly, among the little mauve clouds in the purple sky.

"When a century or more has passed," he thought, "will men stand in the twilight to look upon the delicate ruins of the last tall chimney? The sails of the last windmill are precious to me to-day, and when my

body is part of the earth, beneath the feet of men who pass by here, will they admire the red stack above the flaming furnace? And will they grieve when this ancient pillar, sending forth smoke like a sacrificial altar, yields up its place to newer forms, while centuries pass over the last miller's grave:

Miller, you're asleep. . . ."

A LABOUR DEMONSTRATION

At six o'clock in the evening, the lower room of the Labour Exchange at Lille is full of men with clay pipes and mugs of beer. Puffs of white smoke rise towards the ceiling and are lost in the blue mist. No one voice is trying to drown out the rest; they are all holding forth with equal violence, delighted to have just elected as deputies men who have worked with them, lived in the same squalor, and suffered similar hardships. They are on the most familiar terms with these men, and carry them about triumphantly on their shoulders. Their election was accomplished in spite of the deception practised by the gentlemen of the Opposition: a party composed of upright people. These upright people brought in a lot of disguised Belgian monks, who voted nineteen times or more on false ballots obtained from the Town Hall. The Labour Exchange men,—clever and determined individuals,—watched these cunning monks, and finally obliged the police to show up their flagrant deception. Scandal broke loose, and the Mayor, who is a man of considerable importance, resigned suddenly this morning. Festivities and every sort of merrymaking are taking place in the poorer quarters. The Flemish

workmen,—a bulky, malicious race of men,—arrived in force, and have just knocked the gilded horseman from his charger; they roar with laughter at the rich men, and at the priests too, for priests are friendly with the rich men here. It is the priests who have set up this golden God,—the people's enemy and the patron of Wealth. It stands for the oppression of the poor, mercilessly dedicated to working for low wages and dwelling in death-traps.

A man in a priest's hat gets up on a table, and, dipping a brush into his glass of beer, he sprinkles the holy water over the laughing faces of the men clustering around the kegs.

Little red paper flags are being sold in the square, and one sees them scattered through the crowd like poppies. Here comes a procession from the Faubourg des Postes, marching behind its accordion. They call themselves: "The South."

"We're all right, us fellas from the South!"

Their arrival causes a slight commotion in the patient crowd, but the musician plays on solemnly in front of the crimson, gilt-lettered standard. From those tiny houses in "The South," black and unhealthy, and from the abandoned army-huts, emerge men and women with determined faces. They are going to laugh, and dance, and scoff at the priests—those pitiless priests who distribute rich men's charity in their homes, their ghastly Charity.

The red flag of Poverty, passing through the crowd, is acclaimed passionately by the women and joyfully by the children, and the workmen wave their caps above their heads.

The grave-faced man with the accordion stands upon the table, from which the holy water was sprinkled, and begins to play the old Carmagnole of the soldiers of Wattignies:

". . . Du pain pour nos frères,
Vive le son . . ."

They were there, those men from " The South," at Wattignies, near Maubeuge. And here come the people from Saint-Saveur, a still more crowded quarter: filthy hovels beneath the city walls. They sing:

". . . A la bataille, ils ont du cœur,
Vivent les Saint-Saveur . . ."

an old tune for the fife, which was played when the army of the North marched to Denain under M. le marquis de Villars. They were at Denain, those men from Saint-Saveur, the Flemish Infantry.

This old, slow-moving race of labourers, once persecuted by the barons with their long spears, to-day by the rich manufacturers with their big factories, imposed upon, beaten, and plundered, has begun to

bend under its burden. But the patient giant can rise up when his time comes, obedient and insolent, oppressed and invincible. To-day he is on his feet.

Crowds of women have come out to celebrate the "Broquelet," the festival of the thread. The *broquelet* was the little bobbin once used by the Flemish lace-makers, who used to sing, by the light of their little student lamps:

"Si tu ne dors point jusqu'à demain,
Tu me feras bien du chagrin."

To-day those lace-makers and their *broquelets* have vanished, but the festival of the textile workers is still called the "Broquelet."

The accordion-player falls into line, and the people advance beneath their crop of flags, filling the streets lined with hovels and factories. They march as one man, without confusion or jostling; twenty thousand people, shoulder to shoulder, except where children march, unseen by the onlooker. The presence of a child is marked by a well in the dense mass of men and women.

Directly behind the music are those who will take active part in the festival; they are surrounded by masses of flowers, and everyone greets them by their first names. Some men, in clerical hats, which rest

precariously upon their irreverent heads, are gesticulating like preachers, and they pull them as far down over their eyes as possible.

The crowd surges by, demolishing all such obstructions as spectators leaning against the walls of the houses, and it carries them along in its noisy current of black and red. The pace slackens as they approach the ancient streets: Wazemmes; Little Belgium; the rue de Juliers where the Flemish of the Lys live, sons of the men who bled at Courtrai, the knights of Philippe le Bel; and the men from the intractable city of Ghent. The Flemish words of the *Internationale* issue forth from big, beer-drinking mouths in solemn brown faces. The daylight begins to fade, and torch-lights are held aloft on long poles. The crowd moves onward, persistent, powerful.

Someone is carrying a pretty little girl on his shoulders; she is wide-eyed with excitement, but not frightened, for it is her father who is carrying her. He sings with his head bent forward, and his little daughter waves a flag which he bought her for a sou. While the accordion is playing, she jumps up and down with delight, and he clasps her feet to prevent her from digging her heels into his chest. Her tiny mouth moves; what is she saying? . . . she advances imperceptible, triumphant, with the singing multitude.

Now they are passing through the rich quarter,

where their arrival was preceded by the sound of their voices. A starless night hangs low over the luxurious houses, and the wide streets enable the crowd to spread to three times its size. The tramways, unable to move, cleave the human tide, and it closes in again after passing them. A man hammers the iron shutters covering the windows of expensive shops, just for the pleasure of making a noise. Where the shutters have not been lowered, he refrains from touching the glass. All the children are being carried now, and they are crying with exhaustion. The little girl with the flag is asleep, with her arms crossed upon her father's head. He is still singing.

The poor quarter has emptied its people into the rich quarter. The crowd fills the Grande Place now, and the pavement-tables of the restaurants are empty. In the brilliant interiors, behind the windows, men with carefully tied cravats are comfortably watching. The people surge up to them; some of them emerge from the flood of humanity, and stand upon the tables. They break nothing, for their irresistible insolence is appeased by putting their feet where the rich man puts his glass. The strength of these men, as profound as the misery in which they live, presses but lightly against the walls of the great houses. These walls would totter to the ground if they so wished it, but they pass on, with torches and flags, towards their hovels and their factories.

The waiters emerge from the restaurants to wipe off the tables, and the outraged rich men listen to the distant song of the Flemish working people, re-entering their dark streets and wretched dwellings.

BOXERS

The square boxing-ring, closed in by ropes, was as white as a bone in the sun, beneath the glare that came down from the arc-lights. Upon the tiers of the amphitheatre, six thousand heads, in widening circles, made whitish lines upon the dark background of clothing. At the foot of this closely-packed hill of men, there was a dazzling ring of plutocrats, sitting on the 250-franc chairs. Lord Youngston, just arrived from London, nodded to M. Prat-Hugo, whose days were passed in watching horse-races and prize-fights. He was always seen, either sitting or standing, at every exhibition of physical exercise, and he was called The Sportsman. He was one of Lord Youngston's intimates, when they met on occasions like this, and the Englishman welcomed him and spoke a few words literally translated into French:

"Je crois que Pedlar Lawn aura le meilleur de Jef Youno."

Lord Youngston stood with his back against the platform; his arms were hanging at his sides, and his clean-shaven face was devoid of expression. His head was touching the lowest of the ropes, which were encased in linen to prevent the boxers from bruising their

skin on the bare hemp. Towels were hanging in two opposite corners of the ring.

The people pouring into the amphitheatre made a noise like waves breaking on a beach, and M. Prat-Hugo said of the crowd:

"We are getting very sporty, very. Really!"

He bowed so low, to greet some ladies, that he almost squeaked when he straightened up again; then he shook hands with a young man with a scab on one of his ears, who was, he said, "Our white hope, middle-weight."

This anglicising of the French language did not tempt Lord Youngston to carry on a very lively conversation. He stood there in an attitude that betrayed his title and his profession of officer in the Indian Army, and sedately watched the white-sweatered seconds.

Mac Ofcourse, Jef Youno's man of business, greeted Lord Youngston, who shook hands with him. His face was fat and very red, and, having once been the Scotch heavy-weight champion, his shoulders, one of which was higher than the other, were still well developed. His present occupation allowed him to fill his stomach with dark beer and red meat, and, since he had taken to wearing evening dress, he was nicknamed Lord Soho-Square. He questioned Lord Youngston:

"Have you put anything on at ten to four?"

"I hope," replied Lord Youngston, "that it will be a jolly match."

Fresh lamps blazed forth in the constellation above, and the crowd thundered out cheer after cheer, for Pedlar Lawn and Jef Youno had entered the ring. Pedlar was wearing a filthy bath-robe, and Jef had thrown his black overcoat over his shoulders, which left his calves uncovered. The two men sat down, each in his corner, and pushed their plaster-bound hands into four-ounce gloves, held out by the seconds. One of Jef Youno's was a Negro.

The boxers pushed the stuffing of the gloves as far as possible towards their wrists, in order to unarm their fists, and the referee made a face as though he had eaten something he didn't like. He went to the middle of the ring and shouted:

"Twenty rounds of three minutes, four-ounce gloves; between Jef Youno, one hundred and forty-six pounds, five ounces, American, and Pedlar Lawn, one hundred and forty-six pounds, four ounces, English.

"To my right, Jef Youno.

"To my left, Pedlar Lawn."

A mist of clapping hands rose from the crowd. The boxers were naked except for the necessary flap, red for Jef and white for Pedlar, and each wore the flag of his country as a belt. They stood in the middle of the ring, while the referee reminded them of the rules in a low voice. Their bodies looked like two

white columns, from which hung their arms and brown-gloved fists. No knotty muscles were to be seen; only their full shoulders and their necks, where the skin was stretched smoothly over the firm flesh, gave evidence of their strength. They went back to their stools, and the order, "Seconds out," soon left them alone in the ring, each sitting calmly in his corner, and seemingly oblivious of the other. At the stroke of the gong they got up, and the seconds reached in and took away the stools. Pedlar Lawn was first in the middle of the ring, dancing about on his toes, and Jef Youno advanced deliberately. Pedlar came forward two steps to meet him, and the two men feinted to draw out unguarded replies, each watching for the chance to catch the other napping.

Pedlar's left struck out quick as a shot, reaching Jef's forehead. The floor was like a drum under their feet, whose rapid blows upon it were like heavy pearls falling from a broken necklace. Jef got it again full in his smiling face, and drew back, but he suddenly crouched, planting his feet firmly, and opposed his shoulder to Pedlar's onslaught. Then he let Pedlar have it full in the stomach, causing him to lurch forward slightly. The two men, cheek to cheek, and forearm against forearm, seemed to be embracing one another, and the referee ordered them apart and walked between them. Jef tied himself into a knot, but Pedlar caught him on the chin, and imprisoned

his right arm under his own left. This manœuvre was so rapid that it got by the referee, and Jef, staggering, received Pedlar's two fists in quick succession, drew back towards his corner, and put his gloves up in front of his smiling countenance. Suddenly he bent over again to receive Pedlar's attack, but the gong sounded the end of the round. The crowd clapped vigorously, and a lady got up from one of the 250-franc chairs to wave her white glove at Jef. The seconds applied wet sponges, and fanned their men with towels, as they sat breathing heavily, with their arms stretched out along the ropes.

A great buzzing of voices rose up after the applause; M. Prat-Hugo was very excited:

"Too much close fighting. The referee doesn't interfere enough."

This was the opinion of Lord Youngston, who began to hold forth slowly and in perfect French:

"This is very ugly! The Americans have debased the noble art of boxing. Their fighters try to wrestle with their fists. Old prints show us the champions of Queen Anne's time, with their ears split by well-judged blows delivered at arm's length. In the reign of Queen Victoria they preferred direct blows, aimed from a distance; thrusts. Boxing is the play of the fists. The Americans have invented in-fighting; they clinch and pound one another. Close fighting, with nothing but blows with the bent arm, is quite un-

graceful. It isn't Boxing! In-fighting is to boxing what the knife is to the sword."

One of Pedlar Lawn's trainers was talking to him in a low voice. The boxer leaned his smooth white face towards him, and he seemed to be sneering.

At the stroke of the gong, the gladiators stepped nimbly to the centre of the ring. Upon meeting they took positions of defence, the left fist advanced, offering a threat that was not carried out. They moved about as though turning on the same axis, and their bodies were like bent bows about to be released. They each made little strategic attacks, always dodged by the other, and no blows were dealt. The crowd roared out its impatience. Then Jef stopped smiling and seemed to be about to attack in earnest.

Accustomed to this facial trick, Pedlar leapt forward, but Jef made a sideways movement of the head from the exact spot where the blow would pass, and replied heavily with his left into Pedlar's stomach. Lord Youngston was about to applaud this fine feat, when Pedlar pitched into Jef with both fists, and the two hammered one another, beating the floor with their heels. The crowd, excited by such brutal procedure, thundered its approval. Jef's face was covered with blood, but he was still smiling, as he sank upon one knee. The referee counted the seconds, and the lady with white gloves leaned forward with her mouth open. M. Prat-Hugo sat with his knees pressed tight to-

gether, biting his left thumb-nail, and some Americans in evening dress cheered the man who was wearing the flag of their country about his waist.

At the eighth second, Jef got up and drew back, with his gloves in front of his resigned smile. Pedlar, continuing his attack, followed him closely, and his busy fists left pink marks on Jef's skin. The gong sounded just as his back touched the ropes.

A roar of applause filled the amphitheatre again, and the dust, beaten out of the floor by the stamping of feet, rose up like mist towards the arc-lights above. The two gladiators seated themselves again in the angles formed by the ropes, laid their arms along the white linen casings, and submitted themselves breathlessly to the ministrations of the seconds, who squirted cold water upon them with their own mouths. Jef closed his eyes, and Mac Ofcourse rubbed his joints with some sort of resinous ointment. M. Prat-Hugo was beside himself with enthusiasm:

"What magnificent fighting!"

Lord Youngston spoke with care:

"It isn't what we see that I admire; it's the fine head-work behind it all! The Yankee fights with his fists only, but he's playing an elaborate game. Pedlar Lawn puts too much drive into it, and loses his breath. I can't go and tell him this. It wouldn't be fair." Then he stated one of the laws of straight fighting: "Let the men fight their own fight."

The gong brought Jef slowly to his feet, smiling tenaciously. Pedlar's white face accentuated the redness of his swollen right eyelid. He came forward quickly, with the idea of planting his right firmly over Jef's heart. The latter took it with his elbow, lowered just in time, and, seeing Pedlar's left foot between his two feet, he fixed it to the floor with his right one, so as to pound his chin. This was soon stopped by the referee, who passed between them; and Pedlar, far from being overwhelmed by it, was only the more anxious for his revenge. He set out furiously to obtain it, and in the tight knot which their bodies now made, he pounded Jef's face with his head, and belaboured his stomach with his elbow. Jef tried to get close to him and hold down his arms, after each order of the referee; he obeyed these and left his man, but then pounced back upon him. They kept on giving it to each other in the loins with the right fist, and some people shouted to Pedlar:

"Break away!"

He tried to, but failed, always persistently hugged by Jef, who managed to escape Pedlar's finishing stroke. The gong sounded, and there was an ovation for Pedlar. Jef's eyes were closed, and he seemed lifeless in the hands of the seconds, who sponged him down with cold water. The chests of both men rose and fell with great rapidity, and Lord Youngston smiled faintly as he noticed that

Pedlar, almost victorious, was breathing faster than Jef.

The signal brought the combatants to their feet; the seconds sprayed their backs with water, squirting it from their mouths, and Jef shook his shoulders as though it had waked him up. Pedlar was upon him in a jiffy, raining ineffectual blows; then Jef got busy, and the two men closed in without further preliminary. Their fists struck hard at close range, and there was no drawing back or lifting of shoulders to show that either of them was getting too much of it. Pedlar's rage increased as he watched Jef's smiling resignation, for he could not accomplish that final stroke. He hammered ceaselessly with his right and with his left: then suddenly, both arms fell to his sides; Jef, quick as lightning, had drawn back and landed him one under the jaw, which lifted him off the floor, and, before Pedlar could raise his arms again, Jef snapped back like a spring, and repeated the dose. Pedlar fell to his knees and the referee counted the seconds over his bent head. At the ninth, he stood up and the crowd cheered wildly, but, stretching out his left, he backed away from Jef and took the classic guard: head back, right fist over the pit of his stomach, and left held shoulder high. Jef smiled, seemingly afraid to drive home his victory, and Pedlar rushed at him, but Jef plunged beneath the wildly waving arms of his desperate adversary and

gave it to him again under the jaw. Then, with his chin pushed out, and breathing so heavily that it seemed to burst like a bomb in his mouth, he struck like lightning with his left, through the waving arms, and arrived with the whole weight of his body: one hundred and forty-six pounds five ounces on Pedlar's chest. The vanquished Englishman, deprived of his last breath, toppled over flat on his back, with his arms stretched out, and Jef stepped back and leaned upon the ropes, with the air of a man who knows he has done his work. The prostrate body in the middle of the ring looked like a white crucifixion. The referee counted the tenth second, and the smooth-faced Americans in evening dress leapt from their seats, shouting vociferously with their big mouths, and pushed their way roughly towards the ring, where Jef's seconds were holding him triumphantly on their shoulders. Two of the most luxuriously dressed among them added their support to the victor; and the woman with the white gloves threw kisses at him, and let out little squeals of delight, for she had put her money on him. Amid the uproar of hand-clapping, yelling, and stamping of feet, Lord Youngston held forth to M. Prat-Hugo:

"Jef let Pedlar have too much confidence in himself, and this confidence lost him the fight. A man must never imagine too soon that he is going to win, for it sets the mind at rest; and a man who makes

no mental effort is lost. Jef allowed his face to get knocked about, in order to have a triumphant man before him, and nothing comes to grief so quickly as a triumphant man. He has not only a physical beating to undergo, but also the blighting of his hopes. Jef used his powers of endurance in dealing with Pedlar, and it was a mental victory. After the second blow he had only Pedlar's body to push about. The best men never jump to victorious conclusions; and anyone who decides that the fight is his is done for. Man has no worse enemy than contentment."

Seated upon the shoulders of his howling countrymen, Jef basked in the brief and furious glory accorded to prize-fighters, and the great electric globes shone down upon him thoughtfully, like the stars.

A BOURBON'S PLEASURES

His Royal Highness Gaston, duc d'Orléans, was on board his yacht *La Maroussia*. It was at Seville, near the decagonal Torre del Oro, tied up to the Guadalquivir orange docks. The water grew bluer as the sun rose in the heavens, and at noon the flaming river was like enamel in a hot furnace. The palm-trees, flourishing beneath the pitiless glare which drove everyone to shelter, only offered little patches of shade, but in the evening their shadows reached far out over the tired water.

In the calle de las Sierpes, Pierre Roumieu had a French pastry shop, where fancy cakes, with or without icing, could be had, and there he learned Spanish: *Buñuelos, Refrescos*. He loved to sit by the water's edge, when his day's work was finished, and the prostitutes who came over the Triana bridge smiled at him, for he brought them stale bread and other leavings:

"What you got for me?" And he replied with an exaggerated description of the surprises he had in his pockets for them all.

He couldn't legally go back into France, for the

simple reason,—according to his own story,—that he was a deserter. But there were other things that people didn't know about.

He wore the tight trousers of a *torero,* but his jacket was French, and the embroidered plastron covering his well-developed chest kept his beautiful red satin necktie in place, from his soft white collar down to his belt. For the women of Triana he was Andalusian, but he looked it only when in his shirt sleeves. In spite of his numerous amusements, he admitted to only one rather unobliging friend. For every step ahead, she took three backwards, especially if one begged her to hurry: a fine mule, with red rosettes, who carried oranges down to the docks. She always planted herself in front of Roumieu's shop, and stayed there until he brought out her afternoon tea of almond paste.

Roumieu looked as though he might be a cousin of Lopito, the mule-driver, on account of his flat hat and his habit of shaving Spanish fashion, but they were alike only when silent. When the Andalusian spoke, his crooked mouth moved in an otherwise inflexibly pious Catholic face. Roumieu, who came from the department of the Var, always kept a smile ready, as though it were just under his skin.

The horn handle of a steel blade was sticking out of the mule-driver's belt. Roumieu said that this capable knife had put an end to Domingo

Lesdeno's earning four *pesetas* a day by killing, skinning, and selling one bullock, six sheep, and twenty-four young goats. No one knew the beginning of this terrible affair, but the result had been seen: Lopito had pinioned the butcher's arm to the door, and then, in order to commit further outrage, he had withdrawn his knife. Covering the crucified man's face with his cloak, he had disembowelled him, as easily as a pious woman opens her prayer-book with a hairpin. Lifting out the intestines, and putting them into a handkerchief, Lopito had said:

"Saint Peter is well avenged!"

Roumieu was great friends with this good Christian, who was grateful to the Orléans family for the job of carting their oranges down to the docks from the park of San Telmo—a little business for which the duc de Montpensier had been nicknamed: *El naranjero*.

The mule-driver pointed to the yacht and said:

"El rey."

The pastry-cook agreed.

"Sobre el agua."

The duc d'Orléans came to see his grandmother, —the duchesse de Montpensier, Infanta of Spain,— invested with many-coloured robes in her devotional *palacio* by the Abbé Juan Episcopo. This dignitary reeked with tobacco, and had taken to live with him, ostensibly from the highest motives, a broad-backed,

dark-haired wench whose skin at least was very Catholic, owing to the rubbing of scapularies.

Dislike of travelling alone obliged His Highness Gaston d'Orléans to surround himself with lively women, to whom he offered riding as a change from yachting; and this was why, on that April day, at the time of the *Féria,* he found himself with a broken leg beneath his horse, to the horror of his friend. She had to dismount from her own horse without help, and send forth scream after scream in her beautiful operatic soprano; and her distress over His injured Majesty lasted for a long time in the open prairie land, with its cactus and vast unbroken stretches. She dropped all her combs, and shrieked and perspired until the peasants came to bear away the injured King upon a stretcher.

The fact that he was taken to a hotel in Madrid, and not to the family palace, was an offence to his grandmother, whose priests and chamberlains prevented her from visiting her grandson in such unbefitting surroundings. An infanta of Spain could not risk meeting, at a public tavern, ladies who went on pleasure cruises, even though they did only stand at the edge of the bed.

The departure was finally arranged, after much palavering on the part of important personages, and His Highness Gaston was carried to San Telmo, where he consoled himself, by consuming soufflé

potatoes, for the reproach that his conduct in *semana santa* was too scandalously vulgar. He remembered his royal destiny, and stuck a red carnation between two of the toes of his incapacitated foot.

Pierre Roumieu supplied His bruised Majesty with pastry, and he became friends with M. Jean Baudet, who made a good thing out of his job of valet to His Highness. M. Jean did not forget Pierre, and the pastry-cook, who knew his way about, helped him to speak to the pretty ladies who cried "*Niño! Chiquillo!*" from behind the wrought iron grilles of the houses, where there were gay carnations on the window sills and in the black hair of the girls smoking cigarettes. All those who earned their living in Seville knew the yacht; and, with bent forefingers, and eyes that twinkled beneath their shawls, the dancers from the Place San Fernando, clacking their castanets and biting the stem of a flower, called out for *el rey*. Other more determined women came down to the docks and loudly demanded their money from the licentious King of France in his palatial craft that floated among the rotten oranges on the Guadalquivir.

M. Jean broke off his acquaintance with Roumieu as soon as he could, and attended to the provisioning of the yacht unaided. The pastry-cook looked for him every evening, in order to administer a well-deserved reproach. Last night there was a pearly white ring

around the moon, and I met him in the streets, vainly searching.

"The duc d'Orléans," he said, "looks like the duc de Bordeaux." And he sang,

"Le duc de Bordeaux
Ressemble à son père,
Son père à sa mère,
Sa mère à mon dos,"

as we walked along together to No. 8, calle Santa Maria, to see Mme. Roustan, of the French colony. This lady, who smoked a great deal and drank quite enough, had acquired strong Catholic beliefs and a taste of uncleanliness from her long stay in Spain. The tips of her fingers touched Holy Water and no other, but she promised to find, in that bathless town, some white-skinned girls who washed themselves from head to foot, English fashion.

Encarnacion, a terra-cotta enameller from La Cartuja, spoke to Pierre caressingly:

"*Hijo de mi alma.*" She was sitting on the wooden staircase, with her elbows on her knees, and her flower-decked head in her hands. On the cool stones of the courtyard, her feet were beating the rhythm of the dance she had just finished. Then her comrade Concepcion came down the stairs, clapping her hands together like cymbals, and threw us the flowers from

her hair and some leaves from the shrubs in the court. Pierre swore, and she took some water from the fountain. Then she held up the lamp to light the stairway for us.

They were proud of their dainty chemises which had been worn by Mme. la comtesse de Paris at her château at San Lucar. In spite of his housemaids, His Highness sold the odds and ends from the wardrobe to old-clothes dealers in Seville.

Mme. Roustan brought in some anchovies in saltpetre from La Manzanilla, and delighted Pierre with her maledictions:

"What a filthy brute to have for a king!"

Suddenly she began to deliver herself on the subject of the Orléans family:

"The only thing that interests them is their own gain. What they did in 1872 was nothing but that: to ask for sixty millions at the very moment when the country had to pay five thousand millions. They said to themselves, 'France won't be swallowed up without us.' They couldn't get what they wanted before the Prussians, but they got it right away afterwards. I gave all the wine I had left to the soldiers of my country. When the duc de Montpensier fought here with Henri de Bourbon, he did it because he knew he would gain by his death. The Orléans let the Bourbon die like a dog at the Carabanchel duelling ground."

Encarnacion clacked her castanets and sang:

" Los niños de Carabanchel."

Her head moved as though she were dancing, and Pierre took down the guitar.

The staff of the watchman came tapping along on the pavement, and the sound of his voice gave one a feeling of tranquillity:

" Go to sleep, it's one o'clock."

Encarnacion looked up at the sky, that sparkled with diamonds, then she yawned and smiled at Pierre childishly:

" Won't you sleep while I sleep? "

. . . . . .

On the second of February, 1897, the Spanish artillery fired off a salute in the passages of Las Delicias for the death of Her Royal Highness Madame la duchesse de Montpensier. The olive-skinned gunners switched the children with mule-drivers' whips for coming too near, and stopped another crowd of children following a cow destined for the butcher's knife. The beast was being prodded with pointed sticks and the blood flowed. A young gunner who was more thrilled by being an *espartero* than with the order to " Fire! " shouted to the children: *" Anda! Hombre! La Muerte! "*

Encarnacion glided by like a garlanded ship, with

her mantilla caught up on her high comb, and flowers in her hair. *Que graciosa!* She gave us the greeting of her country:

"God be with you."

The Abbé Juan Episcopo came running up to them; the guns had been fired too soon. Oxygen-tanks were giving the Infanta a few more hours of suffering, and she was just conscious enough to speak, when she heard the noise of the firing:

"Not yet."

Perhaps she was thinking of her last illness. Her recovery from it had begun with astonishment at seeing so many empty drawers. The head housemaid, Teodora, had been obliged to reply:

"Madame la comtesse de Paris thought that God would call her to him."

The gunners were now able to repeat their salute, and since the Duchess had desired to be buried as a nun, her corpse, according to the rules of the order, was clothed in brown cloth, and a tight white cap was placed on the wizened head. Then it was laid upon the flagging of the palace chapel as though the Infanta had fallen there, stone-dead.

The humility of her burial was quite in keeping with the piety and simplicity of this great lady, and the unpopularity of her husband, prince d'Orléans, was obliterated, in this country of beggars, by enthusiastic praises for the Benefactress.

The louse-covered gipsy-women who camped at La Macarena called her *Nuestra Madre,* and when she passed by they crossed themselves with one hand and stretched out the other.

Lying there upon the stone floor, she seemed to have grown taller, and the flowing line of her slender body was broken only in two places: at the crucifix clasped on her breast by fingers which bore a single silver ring, and at her nose which was sharply attenuated by Death.

Servants kept the people in order as they filed past. There was Mme. Roustan, then Encarnacion with lace at her wrists from the dead woman's drawers, and some gipsy-men and *toreros,* then the children who had wearied of plaguing the cow, and the officer who had ordered the premature salute.

Rows of candles burned upon the altars.

The royal will contained other clauses besides the one concerning the manner of burial. Money had been left to the Holy Church at San Telmo, and there was great perturbation among the members of the family. Representations were made at once to the ecclesiastical authorities regarding the illegality of this attempt upon the Orléans fortune.

The Archbishop gave them his blessing, and the family, with a great appearance of filial affection, began to look piously around for mementoes of their grandmother. It was easy to see why the silver ring

was the only thing left on her hands: the finger would have had to be cut off to get it. The great wrought iron grille at the palace entrance, with its polished copper knobs, filled the princes with emotion: "It is an heirloom!"

Their affection for their grandmother was more easily satisfied in the Salon de Columnas, which was full of heavy objects of priceless beauty and composition. These were carried out with an agility quite remarkable in people who were not movers by trade. Who got the big ivory Christ? Under whose arms would those valuable vases disappear? And which member of this noble race would take those gem-set swords from the armoury, forgetful of their glorious blades?

The nail from the Holy Cross, a mere piece of iron in a crystal case, remained untouched, as well as the Pope's white cap, obtained by the Duchess. She had knelt before him as a pilgrim, and, after a handsome gift to the Holy Church, had asked: "Might I have a souvenir of Your Holiness?" Her reward had been this thing worth thirty sous.

The housemaids prayed and wept, and they bowed low to Amélie of Portugal, who walked past with her head erect. Her hands were empty, for she was a queen. Then the chapel bell put an end to the pillaging, and the priests, beneficiaries under the dead woman's will, proceeded with the funeral service, turn-

ing the Holy Sacrament towards the family, who piously inclined their calculating heads.

When the duc d'Orléans was well again, he met his helpful friend, the singer, at the Savoy Hotel in London. His relish for her and *patatas*,—now become soufflé potatoes,—kept him in good spirits, but Jean Baudet complained on behalf of His Highness that they were not as nicely puffed out as at San Telmo, because they were partially cooked long in advance.

The stifling hotel kitchen was on the same floor as the cool restaurant, and when their work was done the weary cooks regaled themselves by peeping through the cracks in the screens at the pompous lords and their dazzling companions enjoying their dinner. His Highness's blond beard was very noticeable with so many clean-shaven faces about him.

The old glutton had to suspend his preparations for the throne to receive an agent of the duc d'Aumale, the bearer of an order to break with his singer, under penalty of being disinherited. In the kitchen, the howler predicted what would happen. This well-educated Frenchman, who had come down to the job of howler in a cosmopolitan restaurant, had lost his money, but not his experience or his good-nature. He bet ten to one with Raymond, the old white-bearded larder-man:

"The duke will get rid of his lady in the presence

of M. d'Aumale's messenger, and without her he would have been a dead man, grilled by the sun on that Spanish prairie. He won't hesitate! When an Orléans has to choose between money and the well-being of a woman or of his country, it is always the money."

He won, and the following night the cantatrice stood outside the door, which had been slammed in her face, and hammered it like a street urchin: a fitting reply to the princely treatment she had received. The Swiss manager came to see who was there, taking his time as usual, and told the lady to be off at once.

The next morning, old Raymond threw off the following opinions, while engaged in his noisy job of splitting bones:

"*Vive la Commune!* She was a nice little thing, and she gave what he asked for. I'm poor, but I'm always polite with women. We can't all be Orléanses. Oh, what a lot of tails there are that never get kicked!"

THE JOY BOYS

On the third of October, at ten-thirty in the morning, a hundred men of the 26th Light Infantry, resting their rifles upon their green epaulets, went into 48 ter, Boulevard de Bercy. It was the freight depot of the P. L. M. Railway. Ten minutes after their rapid entrance, fifty foot-solders with polished buttons came in and piled their rifles against the railing. Behind it some dray-horses were struggling to keep their feet on the slimy cobblestones. Twelve surly municipal guards came next, looking enormous with their shakos and their thick covers slung over their shoulders; then twenty policemen from the Twelfth Arrondissement took up random positions on the pavement.

People stopped, and asked:

"What's going on?"

"It's the Joy Boys goin' off," said a barrel-maker in a jute apron. "That's not like it used to be. They used to bring 'em in a bunch from the Reuilly barracks, with fixed bayonets. They made more noise 'n a lot o' stewed women. Now, they comes one by one. It keeps 'em calm. Those guys won't make no noise; they'll kick up no fuss."

Uninterested, he went off to his work, and the other people in the street, being of the working class too, had no time to stand watching for long, so after a moment or two passed down the boulevard. At this point, it sinks to a low level between the pavements, and is crossed by an iron bridge just to the left of the station entrance. The noise of the trains, running over the joints in the tracks, drowned the words of three journalists standing near the policemen. But no one wanted to hear what they were saying.

One of the reporters, who had a brown goatee, spotted the first Joy Boy with a friend whose white knapsack weighed down one of his shoulders and kept knocking against his back. When the recruit spied the policemen, he shied, and turned away his bull-dog jaw. Then the two sour-looking individuals padded off in their blue-laced slippers in the opposite direction. Heads downward, they went to console themselves with a glass of white wine, with other Joy Boys and their companions, who were noiselessly consuming small bitter drinks at a nearby table.

A boy in a blue smock, with eyes open and mouth closed, sat stupidly between two women, whose short hair proved that they had just come out of the hospital. Near him sat a clownish-looking fellow who seemed to be in a terrible temper. He wore a black jersey, and had buttoned his fur-collared overcoat across his shoulders. A dark-haired woman in black

silk sat beside him, and kept their two glasses full; and her face, which already betrayed weariness with her obvious occupation, grew paler at the thought of the impending separation. Her lover had his arm around her neck, and his big idle hand hung down over her ample bosom.

In front of the next restaurant, another group occupied a table soaked with the wine spilling constantly from the glasses in their trembling hands. An old woman, and three younger ones from a work-room, faced four men whose elbows were solidly planted upon the liquid surface of the table. One of the men, in a blue ironworker's smock, but yellow shoes, was softly playing an accordion, and the old woman's tears fell rapidly as she listened to it. The younger women's eyes were red, and they hung their heads dolefully.

Two light infantrymen brought in the canteens of their squad to be filled with wine, and a tall man with grey hair, carrying a brand new valise, offered to treat them to coffee if they would look after the youngster with him:

"I wish you'd take this lad inside."

The soldiers stopped corking the cloth-covered canteens, and looked at the youth: voluptuous pink on his round cheeks; brown eyes, lengthened out by blue-pencilled lines at the outer corners; thick lips; and a receding chin. He was seated at a table, drinking,

with a little brunette, who was smiling the fixed, stupid smile of a timid child.

"Sure thing. He better go in," said one of the soldiers. "They're called for, any time before ten. It's striking now."

The tall man's head just missed the gas-fixture as he turned to call:

"Come along, Maurice!"

Maurice hesitated; he was listening to the rest of the recruits, whose despair had not been mitigated by the wine they had drunk:

"It's yer last throw, young fella."

But he went off in spite of them, for the little brunette, still smiling timidly, had given him a shove.

Fresh tables were being arranged on the pavement, for the expected crowd of gloomy Joy Boys and their dismal companions. No laughter was to be heard anywhere, and the policemen walked back and forth like watch-dogs guarding a pack of tamed wolves.

The tall man stooped to say good-bye, near the bench where the reporters waited in vain for something sensational to happen. One of them, who was wearing a green felt hat, attempted to interview him:

"Your son doesn't look as if he belonged here."

"He isn't my son. His mother asked me to bring him here. He had meningitis when he was a child,

and now when he takes a drink he goes completely off his head. I wish he'd go in; I've got to be at the Gare du Nord at eleven."

The reporter and the boy with the pencilled eyelids looked each other over. They both had the same insolent expression, and were dressed with equal flashiness. The reporter wore a red cravat and a checked shirt, wishing to be taken for a sportsman, and somehow one had an undefinable impression of their similarity. The youth addressed the journalist in the dialect of his forebears, as though the latter were claiming relationship:

"None of your nonsense. I've worked for Morny."

The reporter hadn't the faintest idea what he was talking about, but laughed, nevertheless, for his calling obliged him to wear the mask of infinite knowledge.

"I believe you've been to number forty-seven, down the boulevard!" exclaimed the Joy Boy.

The man who had to be at the Gare du Nord at eleven continued his elucidation of this extraordinary personality:

"When he has 'em like that, he's sure to get into some sort of a mess. He's had four months twice, for getting into scraps, and there were two years when he had to live away from home. It'll make a man of him to go out there. Go on in, Maurice. Your time's up."

"We'll meet again," said Maurice, "when the class

comes back." And shouldering his valise, he handed his papers to a non-commissioned officer standing at the entrance.

A good-looking youth, elegantly dressed,—a necessary requisite for those who wished to make use of women,—passed by, arm in arm with a girl who carried his knapsack; then two young men with their two companions, four abreast. The women would have consented to anything, and their bodies could be readily noted beneath carefully chosen dresses. The dragging steps of their escorts at an early hour, and the smartness of their get-up, proclaimed the lazy life of kept men. This care in dressing showed the weak point in their characters; one would have easily taken young men, in blue smocks like theirs, for honest workmen and good fellows, but the working clothes always had a foundation of buttoned shoes.

An old policeman, No. 256 XIIth, undertook to explain politely to the Joy Boys that the time for parting had come. He succeeded with five of them, who waved their good-byes and disappeared behind the line of soldiers. A gang of sewer-men emerged from a nearby man-hole; their feet were wet and heavy, and they came slowly to positions of rest; one hand upon their dripping scrapers, and the other holding little iron lamps without chimneys. They formulated the people's mistrust of law-courts:

"There's guys has done enough to deserve bein'

sent off, but they don't get 'em. And the ones that goes ain't done half as much."

"And what do us fellas get for our hard workin'?" said the last of the gang, drawing an unexplained parallel between his own misfortunes and those of the Joy Boys. Then, realizing that the minutes were flying, they walked off to their unpleasant work.

The journalists put their heads together, and launched forth upon a lively discussion; they talked at the top of their lungs, desiring to be heard above the noise of the trains clattering over the bridge. One pale young man, with a callous spot on his nose where his glasses rested, squinted his tired eyes and declared:

"France is in a bad way. In order to strengthen the municipal forces, a law was passed on March 21, 1905, which provides that only men who have been in prison for at least six months, one or more sentences, can be sent to the African Battalion."

A travelling salesman put down his sample-case and complained:

"It's shameful! My son's finished all his studies, and now he's garrisoned at Nancy with a lot of mackerels. A nice thing for parents to have their only son landed into a crowd like that, after all the sacrifices we've made to get him a decent education!"

"It's because he's your only son," said the young man with the bad eyes; "those mackerels take the place of the brothers you didn't give him."

Another of the journalists pulled vigorously at his little brown beard, as if he wished to ring a bell to announce this observation:

"What's the difference between a boy of the middle classes who enlists in the Hussars because he's robbed his father, and a Joy Boy who gets sent off to Africa for letting himself get pinched, doing the same thing at two o'clock in the morning?"

"He doesn't belong to the family," replied the travelling salesman.

A great flat dray came lumbering along the uneven cobbles, and a little hand-truck which had been insecurely loaded on to it fell into the street. From this crowd, who were supposed to be known for their alacrity to do harm, ten men leapt forward to pick it up and replace it on the dray, thus saving the horses the trouble of stopping and starting again on the slimy stones.

The journalists at last began to show signs of rejoicing:

"Ah! Now they're coming!"

From the boulevard came the sound of Bruant's song:

"*C'est nous les joyeux . . .*" And they surged up over the empty pavement, dancing and gesticulating. A little old woman was being dragged along between two of them, and their crazy steps shook the spectacles that she was trying to keep in place with

her bent fingers. Necks, stretched out by the effort of shouting, were often surmounted by heads that looked like animals': anywhere from a rabbit's nose to a boar's snout. A major led the crowd, moving along on bent knees, like a cripple sitting in a bowl, with the agility acquired by long practice at public dances. On seeing the police, they swerved slightly, but sang all the louder, and when they passed under the bridge their heads spun with the echo, and they used up every ounce of strength in their crazed bodies in order to increase the volume of noise. Frenzied yells poured from their twisted mouths, until they reeled with dizziness. They imitated the Major's antics, like so many drunken animals, accentuating each step with a shout. The little old woman was jounced about by her two escorts, and her head wobbled back and forth between their two supporting shoulders. Her spectacles dropped into the street, and one could see that her eyes were full of tears. Then they sat down at the table abandoned by the people who had come to say good-bye to the Joy Boy with the accordion. The neck of a bottle of red wine was sticking out of one of the men's knapsacks, and he laid his head for a moment on his sobbing mother's shoulder, and then, with quick determined steps, he went through the line of soldiers, which closed in behind him.

Other Joy Boys followed his example, and left their

women weeping alone. The prostitutes did not concern themselves with the crowd of onlookers, for they had no heart now for their work, and tears rolled down over their faces, distorted by grief. The woman in black silk set them an example of amazing courage: standing very straight against one of the bridge stanchions, she turned a set face towards the policemen; her mouth trembled, and beneath the skin of her neck,—bared for professional reasons,—one could see that she was swallowing hard; but that was all.

Near her, an old soldier, from one of the African battalions, exemplified the benefits to be derived from African discipline. He was drunk, and from beneath a moth-eaten moustache he slobbered out his scorn for uniforms and authority. There was a gleam of brutality in his eyes, and he sneered at the sacred anguish of those mothers with their hands held before their faces.

An infantry captain had the call sounded up and down the boulevard, and the remaining Joy Boys presented themselves at this last summons.

On the side where the sign "WALK YOUR HORSES" was hanging, the Company's clerks left their books to watch them coming in. Their orderly souls were horrified at the spectacle of these idle men. They declared:

"It wouldn't do to meet them at night," and returned to their work.

A stern officer grouped the recruits in front of the city tolls office, where the customs officials waited, scowling but patient, under shelter of the vines around the doorway. The loss of their freedom calmed the spirits of the Joy Boys, who were dazed by wine, grief, and fear. Their minds contained but one sensation: the dread of impending authority.

"They're goin' to make us sweat for it," said the one in blue slippers with the bull-dog jaw, conjecturing about their labours of atonement.

The corporals, who were obliged to be severe in the presence of their superior officers, could be very agreeable when away from them, and they coaxed the Joy Boys now in a most friendly and engaging manner. They knew how useless it would be to try to pacify these sullen individuals with the accepted methods of severity. Some of them were too drunk to fall for this unexpected kindness, and maintained the stubborn attitudes which it had been their intention to adopt. They snapped out surly replies to the soldiers' good-humoured questions:

"What t'hell d'ye mean? . . . That's no god damn business of yours? . . ."

"Which is it fer you? Algiers? Wait till ye see the women there!"

An enormous limousine slid softly into the court, and, emitting a hoarse groan from its gleaming brass horn, came to a standstill behind a van containing the

furniture of M. Hart-Olivier, a rich financier. His agent, M. de Batonnet, an ex-cavalry officer, had arrived to superintend the loading of these sumptuous articles, bound for Lugano. Mme. Hart-Olivier, who was honorary president of the S.D.M. (Society for the Diminution of Misery), had decided to spend her winters there. M. de Batonnet ordered the doors of the van to be opened, so that he might make a final inspection of the packing, and one could see pieces of brass and polished wood shining in the obscurity; a massive gilt knob protruded from one of the canvas coverings, and the recruits, intrigued by these riches behind their curtain of straw, edged up as near the van as possible. They longed to set fire to it, for they had an instinctive hatred of the luxury their misery had helped to produce.

The infantrymen now lined up the Joy Boys in the station guard-house, to have their service papers revised by two majors of the Medical Corps. The chronic drunkards, whose craving had become unbearable, begged for drinks, and, being refused this dispensation, they lifted clenched fists, only to drop them again hopelessly. They realized now that this kind of satisfaction was no longer to be indulged in.

The recruits chewed their cigarettes nervously, and the atmosphere was heavy with smoke and liquor. No one dreamt of opening a window, but several of the men agreed that some of the panes should be broken.

The noise and fresh air reanimated them with mischievous energy, and a volley of empty wine bottles soon demolished the two gas jets, but the sudden entrance of the municipal guards had a calming effect. The recruits were then gently pushed towards the doctors, for whom they stripped to the waist. Declarations of love and seditious inscriptions were tattooed upon most of the bared chests and backs. The threadbare "To hell with the police!" surrounded two crossed knives upon the muscular chest of the one with the bull-dog jaw and shifty eyes.

The doctors, with their stethoscopes and towels, said: "Cough!" and raucous throats barked in reply.

The accordion player with the yellow shoes took a deep breath and displayed the representation of a pierced heart, and the words:

"Titine's for life."

The repeated consecration of bodies to Titine testified to the popularity of this pet name, and upon another, marked by two scars, occurred a verse both socialistic and erotic:

"My head is for Deibler,
The rest for Titine."

The dignity of the staff-officers, with their gilt

shoulder-knots, was slightly compromised by a too close scrutiny of these indecorous devices, but they completely regained it by means of curt orders to the recruits, snapped at them from across the room:

"Examined men! Out this way!"

Upstairs, in the long mess-room, the municipal guards on duty succeeded in impressing the recruits with the wisdom of complaisance,—they were used to handling crowds. Huddled around the windows, the men gazed gloomily out over Paris for the last time, and their minds were filled with regret at the thought of all those wine-shops, without which life would be impossible.

A recruit who should have presented himself the day before was severely reprimanded by the captain:

"Why weren't you here yesterday?"

"Had too much liquor in me." This was quite obvious, for he could scarcely keep his eyes open, and his baby face was still flushed like ripe fruit—an attribute highly prized by women.

"Go round to the boulevard de La Chapelle," said the captain; "they'll tell you what to do."

Completely mystified, he replied:

"I'm late already, and if I beats it now, I'll only be later."

His mind, accustomed to direct answers, was incapable of encompassing the intricacies of official red

tape, and he stopped two or three times on his way to the door, lost in meditation, thereby throwing his escort out of step. He begged for their advice:

"What d'ye think I've got to do?"

"Keep moving," they told him.

He wanted to go back again to the officers, but was prevented from doing this, and the troopers said:

"They told ye what to do, and now they don't want ye messin' about askin' questions."

He repeated pitifully:

"Where'll I go?"

The guard of light infantrymen took up their rifles, and surrounded the Joy Boys who had been brought from the mess-room. Forty-seven refractory ones were missing.

"Forward, march!" commanded the captain, and the recruits advanced, keeping time with the regular step of the soldiers, like a column of prisoners of war.

The special train was waiting on a side track, and the infantrymen filled their canteens at the drinking fountain—after carefully swallowing their contents of ten-sou wine—to appease the thirst of the Joy Boys from the North, who had been brought from Cambrai by an escort of first-line troops. They had been confined in a third-class carriage, marked C. 1977 21 T., since eight o'clock that morning, and the approach of the Parisians brought them crowding to the windows. The open mouths of these stolid, brown-skinned

Flemish men,—experts with the knife,—were the only evidence of their curiosity.

The soldiers, reinforced by the police, took up positions facing the train, and formed a living barrier against any intrusion of the railwaymen, who were freed from their labours by the striking of twelve o'clock.

M. de Batonnet concluded his important supervision of Mme. Hart-Olivier's furniture, and greeted a staff captain, whose well-anointed hair at the back of his head repeated the gleaming black of his varnished boots. This smart-looking individual felt the need of exercising his authority, so he turned to the crowd of inquisitive clerks, and ordered them to stand back, accompanying his words by a series of rapid indications with his gloved hand.

The unadorned officials of the Railway Company made a poor showing beside these gaudy and incompetent officers, but they answered their requests for information patroniznglY, and told them to take their seats, for it was time for the train to start: twelve-eight.

In the confusion of the last minute, the officers were forced to abandon their rigid attitudes. The locomotive moved slowly forward, and a tight bunch of heads filled every window. The men from the North still gazed silently and stupidly, like caged animals, at the people on the platform; but the Parisians screamed

out their hatred of their old enemies, the police. Their faces were distorted with rage and despair. Fists and clenched hands shot out furiously, almost tearing arms from shoulders. These men were now under military control, and the policemen remained silent, trying to conceal their anger at the insults hurled at them.

The noise of the train, now well under way, drowned the spent voices, and the yelling soon ceased, except for one man, who was leaning through a broken window, holding the two jagged edges with his hands. His words were inaudible, but his lips showed that he was repeating over and over again, " To hell with the police! "

Then he disappeared beneath the attack of a recruit just behind him, who stretched out his arms and shouted:

" Good-bye, Brothers! "

Perhaps he saw some friends, or it may be that he was addressing himself to the watching crowd.

The red disk on the end of the train passed out of the station, and the officers on the platform pulled out their watches and hurried off to lunch. An infantry sergeant raised his rifle: " Attention! " and the railwaymen, who had been distracted for a moment by the departure of these forlorn individuals, resumed their ordinary existence.

MONSIEUR BECQUERIAUX

M. Becqueriaux, of the Soudant Weaving Mills (Becqueriaux & Co.), walked into a barber-shop, and was shown to a vacant chair by one of the white-coated barbers.

"This way, Sir. Do you wish a hair-cut?"

"Yes. And a shave too, please."

"Very good, Sir. Would you care for a magazine?"

"No."

M. Becqueriaux had to meditate upon more urgent matters than the pictures in a magazine. He calculated:

"Urals are 482 to-day, and they're going up. I sold 300 shares short, at 350. On the thirtieth, when the affair is wound up, they'll be up to 500: a loss of 45,000 francs."

He passed his arms through the sleeves in the barber's cloth, and replied to his question:

"Yes, cut it rather short."

Sitting there with his arms crossed in his lap, he gave one the impression of a white sack, burst open at the top by his black head, beneath the barber's gleaming scissors. A precise voice next to him said: "Wipe it carefully, please." He rolled his eyes as far around as possible, and discovered M. Renard, his

blond hair almost invisible under a thick coating of lather. A barber, with rolled-up sleeves, began to rub vigorously.

"That's enough," said M. Renard, and he greeted M. Becqueriaux in the mirror. The latter replied by raising his eyebrows, since he was obliged to keep his head still for the barber.

"He could easily get me out of this scrape," thought M. Becqueriaux; "forty-five thousand francs would mean nothing to him. He gives twice that amount every year to the women around here and in Paris. But I won't ask him for it; he was nearly sold up six years ago, and it increases his opinion of himself to see this happen to others."

M. Becqueriaux turned his head as much as the scissors would permit, in order to see the occupants of the other chairs. The shop was patronized exclusively by big business men.

M. Evricourt, Counsellor-General, who was as big as two men, held forth to his barber at the top of his lungs. Universal suffrage had taught him to talk to everybody, and he was a democrat. Ever since the war scare, he had kept aside two hundred thousand francs in gold, but this did not prevent him from indulging in frequent flutters in Textiles,—he was the owner of several spinning mills, and his plunges were usually taken at the right moment. There was a million francs' worth of flax in his establishment in the

rue au Peterinck, on which he expected a rise, and he had just scored off his brother, who had been obliged to buy tow from him; this transaction had netted him three hundred thousand.

M. Bonnel, whose eyes were the colour of the razor blade that moved across his cheek, wore his usual appearance of gloom. People didn't know just what he was worth, but his wife had never been seen without at least ten thousand francs hanging from each ear. His friends declared that he assisted firms that had come to grief, put them on their feet again, and then sold out his share at a profit of one hundred per cent. When the Artificial Silk Company had privately wound up its affairs, the factory, and the property on which it stood, had come to him as mortgagee. Two days ago he had sold these back to the company at a profit of three hundred per cent., for the manufacture of the Carlier Patents, of which concern he himself was the director. Others said he sometimes came out badly in these deals, and that he lived on what he made out of his cotton twisting business.

"I wonder whether he's worth a lot," thought M. Becqueriaux, "or whether he's just comfortably off? His clothes, and the expression on his face, don't give the slightest hint. When he hears I'm done for, he'll come rummaging into my affairs to see if there's anything he can turn to account, even if he is worth twenty million francs."

He tried to see into the minds of these men, who nodded to him in the street, and asked after his wife and children. The ones he knew best would take his downfall calmly; and the others would be delighted, and would say he had bitten off more than he could chew.

"Soudant took me as a partner on account of my ability, and not because of my hundred thousand francs. I wanted to increase my capital by a little speculation, and I've lost. Soudant helped me out last year. He said: 'You can stay with us, but don't gamble any more.' He made a fortune at it, and he's afraid I will too. He'd never get over it, if I should make as much as he's got. I know he wants to keep me, and he'll never regret doing it. It's going to take my whole share in the year's profits to get me out of the hole I'll be in. I wonder on what terms Soudant will advance it to me."

The barber obliged him to sink his chin upon his breast, and M. Becqueriaux, who hated being pushed about like this, shook his head irritably. Then he closed his eyes, and began to weigh his chances with Soudant:

"It takes an experienced man to manage the rascals who call themselves workmen to-day. Soudant's not up to it, and never will be; he's only a business man. The men are like a lot of convicts, and it's a good thing, because they need a warden. The firm won't let me go."

He felt a sudden pressure on his left shoulder; the barber was leaning heavily upon him, as though he were a piece of furniture, and M. Becqueriaux's first impulse was to shake him off, and treat him to the kind of language his workmen heard him use. But a sort of shyness, that he couldn't at all understand, kept him silent and motionless in his chair. Was he afraid of raising his voice in the presence of these men, who would, perhaps, soon be wishing to avoid speaking to him? In the mirror before him, he watched the barber. He was a thin, grey-haired man, whose white jacket and well-cut hair gave him a superficial appearance of youth, but his fifty-five years could not be more than momentarily masked. He supported himself on his customer's shoulder, his white face distorted by a sudden pain, and he watched anxiously to see whether the man, whose money was going to buy his bread and butter, had noticed anything out of the way. M. Becqueriaux lowered his eyes, and the scissors began snipping, but only to come again to a sudden stop. An acute attack of sciatica, or something like it, had taken the barber just above the hip, and he writhed with the pain of it. Then M. Becqueriaux thought someone was looking at him from the mirror, and he was astonished to find that it was himself, Becqueriaux; he had never seen this expression upon his face before. A man's thoughts can alter his face more than a hair-cut, and

he flashed a welcoming smile at the unfamiliar reflection in the mirror.

The barber straightened up, supporting himself with his two hands on the wooden back of the chair:

"Shall I shave you, Sir?"

"Yes, please," said M. Becqueriaux, and when the lather was on his face, he saw that the pain had not abated. He tried to assist the barber by holding his cheek in a position requiring the shortest possible movements. The razor passed slowly, but carefully, over his face. The tortured man was doing his work well.

M. Becqueriaux spared him as much as he could:

"Don't bother with my moustache. It'll do quite well like that, thank you."

He put on his overcoat, before the barber had a chance to hold it for him, and slipped five francs into his hand. The grey head bowed low.

M. Becqueriaux nodded to M. Evricourt, whose smiling face was red and smooth. Outside, the cold wind bit into a tiny cut on his left cheek. He touched it, and saw a little pink spot on his forefinger. He wasn't angry at all; a moment ago, he had not recognized his own face in the glass; now even his impulses were strange to him. What sort of a face would he find looking at him now? . . . This was how he learned what pity was.

THE KING'S C'S

My friend Pélaud, bachelor of letters and butcher, was polishing his right thumb nail on a steel which he held in his left hand.

"What are you doing that for: to cut your quid? You look a bit down in the mouth. Customers no good? Eh?"

He started to whistle:

"Tous les clients sont des cochons."

Then he pointed to a young man dressed in his Sunday clothes, who stood in front of the Church of Saint-Philippe-du-Roule, crying: *"L'Action Française."*

"There's something you can get real amusement out of. It's the only comic paper you can get now for a sou. *Le Rire* and *Le Sourire* cost four, and you can read them for nothing when you get a hair-cut. *L'Action Française* is never at the barber's. Have a look at it."

He beckoned to the distinguished vendor of the paper, gave him a sou, and told me:

"He's a capital C, which means King's Camelot. Too much trouble to say all that."

Pélaud, who just missed being a priest, explained his present plight:

"I'm a butcher because I'm stony broke."

His continual habit of pulling out his empty pockets had earned him the usual nickname: Pélaud.* He had all the current notions about the butcher's trade, and was always surprised when people refused to eat meat that had not been killed.

"And do you eat nothing but killed meat? Dead mutton is dead mutton, from the time it stops moving until it starts to move again."

He made a great fuss over the King's Camelots to please his old boss in the rue de Bellechasse, who had to keep on the right side of the high-grade customers in his quarter. Now Pélaud had a different opinion of these gentlemen:

"*Antique Foutaise!* They're humbugs and out of date. Nothing but ghosts, and always in evidence. I couldn't be one of them, any more than I could be a priest. It takes courage not to mind being taken for a fool when you bark at the moon."

Pélaud was delighted with my attention, and seemed pleased to have someone to whom he could speak in a language above that of his profession; he began to draw upon his knowledge of pure French:

"These little fellows make a great mistake in taking time from their studies to amuse the public with their

* *Pélaud,* slang for "sou."

attempts to look important. One ought to do important things with the air of doing nothing, and an appearance of great preoccupation should only be worn when one has nothing to accomplish. They worship their lord and master Philippe, who was careful enough to take a number: eight,—as one generally does when one has to wait.

"They're tender-skinned fighters, and for that reason they're usually clever enough to arrange their brawls when they themselves are in force against one opponent. The only thing is, they have no rallying cry; I told them to use, 'Pee-weet!' for 'Montjoye Saint-Denys!'

"M. Charles Maurras, from whose mouth fall jewels, teaches them political paleontology, and M. Pujo has charge of their immortal souls: 'You don't agree with me! ALL RIGHT! Where's the whip!'

"They're like siphons of soda water. Always bursting out with something, in the belief that the gentleman with ticket No. 8 can be put on the throne of France by punching people in the face and making crazy speeches."

Pélaud held up his hand:

"Stop laughing! You'll wear yourself out and make the jokes stale before his turn comes, and when he's dead . . ." He pointed to Article 445 of the Criminal Code in the newspaper.

"It's always the same old story till you're sick of

it. They cut out wooden amulets and give them to the youngsters who do the best fighting. When they hang them around their necks like scapularies, they acquire fresh strength. I got the talisman for teaching them to pour lead into mutton bones, but they were much too well brought up to know how to use them. They're still at the scratching stage,—a long way from killing anybody yet. They're not assassins, but only puppets, quite incapable of murdering anyone, or of putting M. Eight on the balcony with an arquebuse. But they do go in for enough violence to suit their contemptible little dispositions, and, as they think, to astonish the public. Hear them now! *Hou-hou!* they're kicking up a rumpus!

"In every nook and corner, you'll find them jabbering their rotten nonsense. They even call the servants together in the Salle Wagram. I get disgusted with flunkies. They never wipe their feet, even for the servants' staircase, where it's so dark that you have to look with your fingers. I always say:

"'If I was like you, paid to go paddling around over carpets with slippers on, or to warm my tail in a comfortable chair, I wouldn't have muddy shoes.'"

He stopped using the ignorant, malicious speech of his calling, and went on more correctly:

"Plenty of servants are C's. M. le comte Eugène de Lur-Saluces told them that M. Eight was King of Labour. Where was he apprenticed? The Comte

didn't say. You find people working everywhere. When Bébé-la-Chinoise started out to do her stunt at Ternes, she used to say: 'I'm off to my work.'"

I offered this explanation:

"King of Labour, who controls the phenomena of production, consumption, and trade."

"Wait," said Pélaud, "I have to go in here a moment. . . . Every labouring man has a dream —not that of being ruled by M. Eight—and His Royal Highness would see it realized if he were to stroll by one fine day, as the C's here are always hoping he will do, and, out of respect for our ideals, we should spoil the seat of this Labour King's trousers with the nails of our labourer's shoes.

"'Please wipe your feet.'

"We know a little History.

"And when M. Eight is crowned, who will be Keeper of the Sponge? M. Charles Maurras? And will there be a brothel near the Palace, or, as they say, in the Palace? Will his accession to the throne be celebrated by illuminations in the bawdy houses?

"The people, who think nothing of the vapourings of these A.F.'s, only laugh at the idea of being ruled by this old scoundrel. The working-people, who want their ideas worked out practically, deserve to be led by a man.

"What does this King do? He runs after women. Pretty theories that are waiting to be put into prac-

tice won't do. If M. Eight's forebears had not long since disgusted us with royalty, he would only have to show himself, and it would turn France's stomach.

"The people who are asking for a King must either have oil to sell, or be afflicted with king's evil. The old ones were nothing but charlatans on whose heads the priests made salad at Saint-Denis.

"And that little chap who's always singing: '*Adieu, veau, vache, cochon . . . couvée.*' I learned that at school too.

"There are King's Camelots still on the bottle, and some have one foot in the grave: the young ones as mad as hatters, and the old ones only able to slobber; for it is written:

'My little Léon,
Every year you live makes you a better C.'

"I'm off. I've got to trim those sirloins." And I heard his voice, now that of a journeyman-butcher:

"Beef at ten sous!
Beef at eight sous!
And it's all good stuff!"

THE SCREEN

M. Pluvinage kept a hotel in the Place d'Armes. The unmarried captains and lieutenants in the line regiment, who were stationed in the little town with its three bell towers, could get their meals there for a hundred francs a month. There were two tables in the long dining-room: one with twenty places, between the fireplace and the window that looked on to the square, and another that would seat forty, by the window giving on to the courtyard. The room was a lofty one, with a beamed ceiling and a tiny fireplace; in winter it was bitterly cold, but the food was good. The officers, and a few consequential civilians, sat at the cheerful table, and the people of small importance sat with the transients at the gloomy one. At least fifteen seats were occupied every day at the officers' table, while the other was never more than a third full, except on market days, when it was encompassed by a dense belt of humanity.

The Flemish lunch-hour was one o'clock, and the officers, who were accustomed to eating at noon, split the difference, and by keeping punctually to this hour every day, they had only to fulfil the tiresome duty of greeting the other occupants of the room on getting up from their meal.

At table they talked shop and food. A little bald-headed lieutenant from Avignon was fond of saying: "In the South, we ate stuffed pumpkin blossoms, and asparagus with mimosa sauce." Or else, "In the Alps, I've often eaten chamois meat; it's delicious!"

The civilians who sat at the officers' table sometimes entered the dining-room with them, but they indulged in conversation of a higher grade. It always amused them intensely to speculate as to why M. Tariet,—a widower with a chicory business, and a pension,—never had any appetite on Mondays. They supposed it was from too much liquor on Sundays, and too much of what usually follows the consumption of liquor.

M. Tariet always came last into the dining-room, and when the little old man smilingly took his seat, M. Boudringhien,—Recorder to the Justice of the Peace, and a man with a reputation for good living,—made noises like a cat calling amorously to its mate: "Miaou! Miaou!" And the captains, whose well-filled stomachs touched the edge of the table, burst into shouts of laughter. They appeared in civilian clothes at dinner, and this attire suited their free and easy manners better than the uniform.

M. Verhard looked more like a soldier than any of the other civilians; he was Chief Receiver of Tolls, Sub-Lieutenant in the Reserves, and Captain of the Fire Brigade, and he gave one the impression of an

enormous wine-cask. This massive figure, always stiffly erect, was surmounted by a very small red face, or perhaps it only seemed small on account of a perpetual frown which shortened the distance between the eyebrows and the mouth. M. Verhard's whole face seemed to be drawn up into a knot at his nose; his calling required severity. He was more carefully dressed than the officers, who wore their caps on one side; the brim of his hat was exactly equidistant from his two big ears. He never laughed when M. Boudringhien said "Miaou!", but he had a weakness for scandal, and his companions nicknamed him M. Fact-is-that, because of his invariable opening phrase.

"The fact is," he said one day at lunch, "that the colonel of our cuirassiers is a licentious old thing. He hung around so much in the waiting-room with those two pretty ticket girls, that the Company had to get rid of them, and since this morning two of the ugliest ones in their employ have been sitting behind the wickets: one's got a beard, and the other's cross-eyed."

The sudden entrance of a captain of the cuirassiers terrified the boarders. M. Verhard sat up so stiffly that he could eat nothing but bread; he was unwilling to risk carrying anything else all the way from his plate to his mouth, for fear of spilling. Then the cuirassier saluted the officers of the line, who stood up with red faces and full mouths.

He asked politely whether the place nearest him was taken, and then sat down with the infantry,—a cuirassier had never before been known to do such a thing. The civilians at both tables stared incredulously, when he wasn't looking their way, and Mme. Pluvinage read him the bill-of-fare. She waited upon him carefully, and he must have enjoyed his meal, for he brought another captain from his squadron with him the next day. There weren't enough cavalry officers at the Mouton Noir to make it worth the proprietor's while to feed them well, so they ate badly, and soon began to suffer from indigestion.

Silver-striped horsemen and gilt-striped foot-soldiers ate together, just as amicably as before the invasion from the Mouton Noir; they passed each other bread and salt, as though it were the most natural thing in the world, but the conversation, which flowed in the usual channels,—food and women,—was monopolized by the cuirassiers.

It was only the civilians who discussed the relative merits of Cavalry and Infantry, and they did this after the officers had left the dining-room. M. Verhard was the cuirassiers' most violent partisan, and he always disposed of the younger Pluvinage,—once an artilleryman, and now a waiter in his father's hotel,—by declaring:

"It takes six-foot soldiers to surround one of our spur-boys."

Then the line regiment left town for a few days' drill, and the cavalry officers were more at their ease. They brought another bachelor to try the food: Captain Count de Pisselet. His eyebrows were very prominent, and they pushed the skin of his forehead up towards his shiny blond hair, causing three deep wrinkles; his mouth was crooked, and it hung open slightly. The astonished civilians, upon whom his scornful eyes never rested even for a moment, spoke to each other in low voices. Amazement seemed to have untied the knot at M. Verhard's nose, and his face spread to a normal size. The table was now occupied by two distinct sets: a huddled group of civilians at the end nearest the courtyard, and the cuirassiers by the window looking on to the square.

Captain Count de Pisselet had not wished to partake of M. Pluvinage's food while the infantry were in evidence, and now he wanted to do so permanently, but without compromising the honour of the regiment. He beckoned to M. Pluvinage, who came and leaned with both hands on the back of a chair upon which he first placed his serving napkin. The old man was bent over with rheumatism, and he looked as though he ought to be passing the collection plate in church, with his smooth-shaven face and black cloth skull-cap.

He made the customary remarks to the officers in the doleful voice men use when they wish to conceal the fact that they are getting rich:

"We try hard to please you, gentlemen. Do you find everything to your liking? Butter's thirty-eight sous a pound, but you always have plenty of it. It's no joke nowadays to run a hotel. Not like selling drinks over a bar, where you've only got to pour out . . ."

"Yes, yes. Quite true," interrupted Count de Pisselet, shortening his face by closing his mouth. "But we want you to arrange a separate service for us in a room to ourselves. There will be five altogether. Will you please see to this?"

"It shall be done," said M. Pluvinage; "you can have a room on the floor above. Same price: a hundred francs a month, wine included. And good wine it is, too! I choose it myself, and there's no cellar in this town can touch mine. Everybody knows I can tell the good from the bad."

In the kitchen Mme. Pluvinage warned him:

"You'll lose customers if you do it. I call it an insult to the infantry! They never make any fuss, and they like everything we give them. It's another story with Count de Pisselet; nothing satisfies him."

When the infantry came back to town, M. Pluvinage said to them:

"Put yourselves in my place; I've got to earn my living, and there's all kinds of customers to please when you're in the hotel business."

They didn't take offence, and on St. Justine's Day

they sent their usual bouquet to Mme. Pluvinage, who opened champagne for them and kissed them all round. She didn't go upstairs to the cuirassiers, for they were waited upon by the scullion, who wore the frock coat in which M. Pluvinage was married.

The cook was furious at the cuirassiers for depriving him of the scullion when he most needed him, and he frequently sent them up trimmings and the tough outside cuts, in spite of the eagle eye of his employer. M. Pluvinage was anxious not to lose five boarders at a hundred francs each, and it was a feather in his cap to have enticed them away from the Mouton Noir. However, one of them could no longer endure the sight of the scullion's hands, and went back. Two others got married, and in November only Count de Pisselet and the second arrival remained.

They had to have an extra supply of fuel, and lights in the evening, for they generally stayed after dinner to smoke by the fire. It wasn't worth while to upset the kitchen for two customers, and M. Pluvinage courageously climbed the stairs to tell them so, and to ask them to come down into the dining-room.

"Think what you are saying," was Count de Pisselet's only reply, but his companion was more practical:

"Put us in the dining-room, but apart from the others; a little table with a screen around it." And Count de Pisselet agreed with him.

M. Pluvinage reached a decision at once, without even consulting his wife; he well knew what her answer would be.

"No, gentlemen, it's impossible! I can't insult my old customers like that. I've got a reputation to keep up, too. And, anyhow, there isn't a screen in the house."

"All right, all right," said Count de Pisselet, "we won't insist."

They got what they deserved, and now they're back at the Mouton Noir, getting thinner every day.

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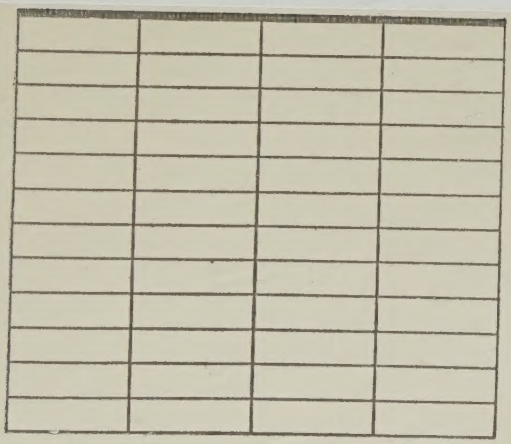

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